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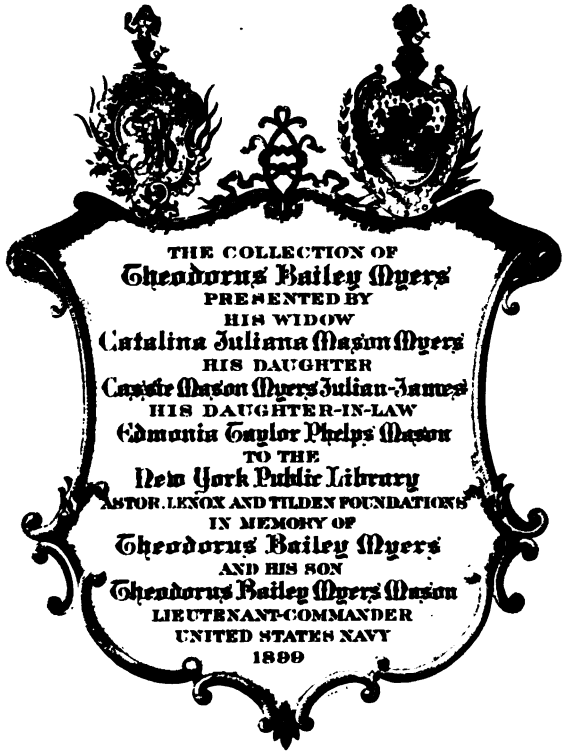
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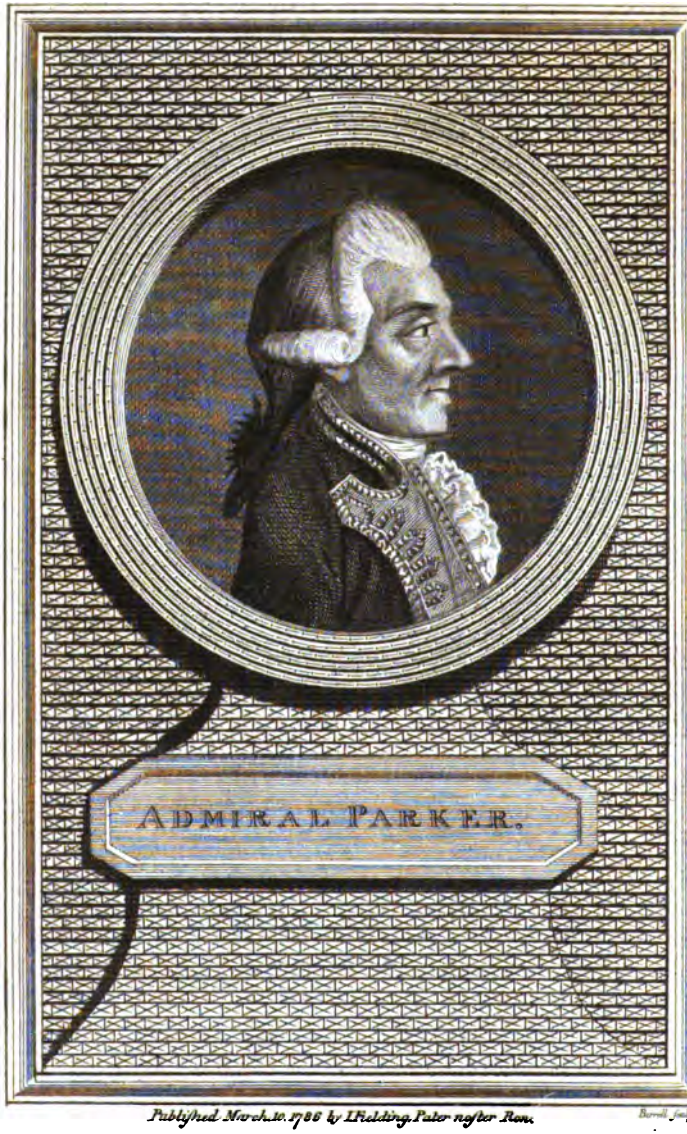


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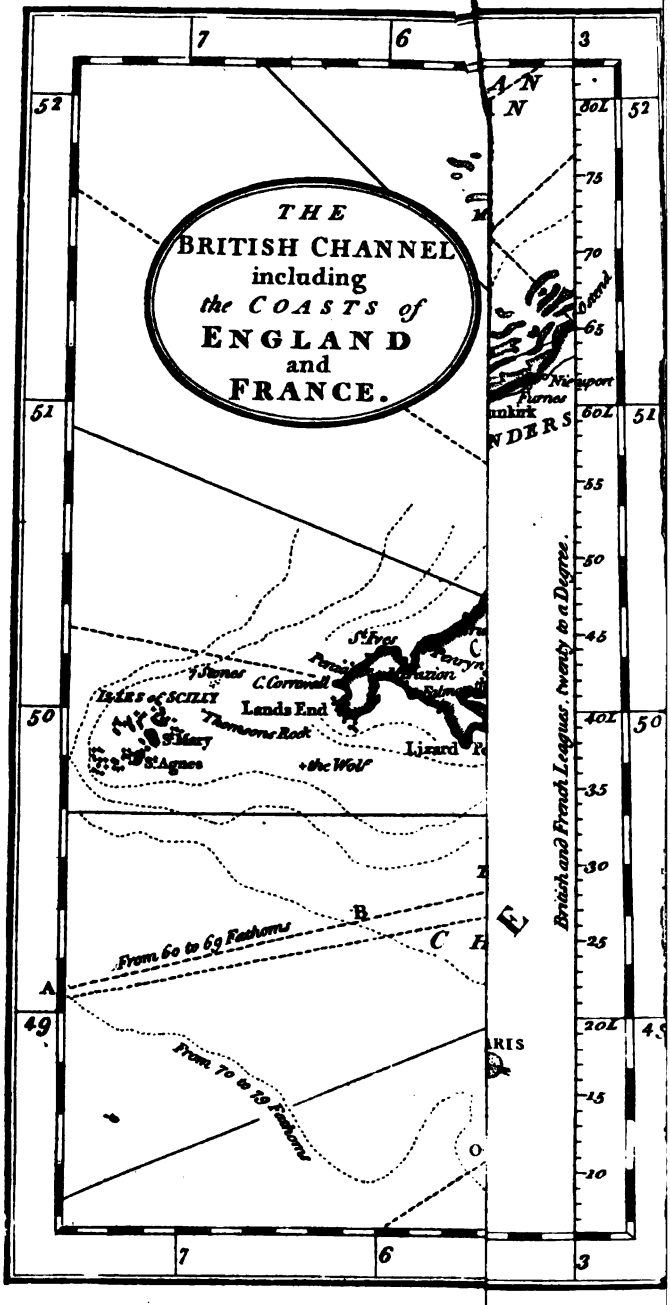


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OF THE

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AND

HOLLAND;

commencing in 1775 and ending in 1783

By JOHN ANDREWS L.L.D.

In Four Volumes with Portraits Maps and Charts

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HISTORY

OF THE

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CHAP. XXX.

Parliamentary Debates relating to America.

1777.

PREVIOUS to the receſs, two motions were made in the Houſe of Commons relating to America; the one by Mr. Hartley, the other by Mr. Wilkes. The firſt of theſe gentlemen moved, that ſeveral reſolutions ſhould paſs in condemnation of the American war; the ſecond, that the Declaratory Act, paſſed in the year ſixty-ſix, ſhould be repealed: but they were both rejected.

From the twentieth of November, when the ſeſſions were opened, to the tenth of December, the buſineſs relating to the pecuniary ſupplies had been carried on with ſuch expedition, that little ſhort of nine millions were already voted for the ſervice of the enſuing year. Accuſtomed as the public long had been to immenſe grants of money, it was ſtartled at the readineſs and facility with which the

national income was profuſed in the ſupport of meaſures which were by no means univerſally approved. In former times, it was ſaid, money was the laſt thing granted; long deliberations took place antecedent to conceſſions of any kind from the people. But their repreſentatives ſeemed to ſet little value on the approbation or diſapprobation of their conſtituents, and were become much more zealous candidates for Court favours, than for the applauſe of their country.

On the tenth of December, it was moved on the ſide of miniſtry, that the Houſe ſhould be adjourned to the twentieth of January. The reaſons alledged for this motion were, that the ſums neceſſary for the ſubſequent year being voted, and the cuſtomary buſineſs at the cloſe of the year concluded, no further meaſures could be reſolved upon, till the iſſue of the laſt campaign in America was fully known. No events of any conſequence were expected, or likely to happen, before the expiration of the receſs propoſed, and it was only then that Parliament would be duly attended.

Oppoſition, on the other hand, condemned in the ſevereſt terms, the idea of ſo early and ſo long a receſs from public buſineſs, at a time when the attention of all people was ſo ſeriouſly taken up with the perilous ſituation of the realm. Such was the alarming ſtate of affairs at preſent, that no man could tell from one day to another, how ſoon the advice and aſſiſtance of Parliament might be required for objects of the greateſt moment. Such a receſs, at ſuch a criſis, was an act full of the moſt unaccountable temerity: it was unexampled, and inexcuſable. The nation had often experienced great dangers, but none to compare with thoſe with which it was now threatened on every ſide. We were plunged in a civil, unnatural, unneceſſary war; we were overwhelmed with expences; we had

hitherto

hitherto met with little elſe than diſappointment and diſgrace; we were conſcious, in ſpite of all miniſterial affectation to the contrary, that the whole Houſe of Bourbon was preparing to aſſail us with all its power: we knew all this, and yet at a ſeaſon when the collective wiſdom of the nation ſhould be pondering on the means of warding off the blows that were ſo viſibly aimed at this country, the meeting of Parliament had been deferred to the latter days of November, and was now, in the early part of December, ſuſpended to the cloſe of January. Was this paying a due attention to the buſineſs of the ſtate? Was it ſhowing a proper reſpect to the public? Was it manifeſting a true ſenſe of the circumſtances of this country?—It was the reverſe of all this. It betrayed indolence, or incapacity. It was a proof that either the danger was not fully comprehended, or that motives too ſhameful to be acknowledged, prevented men from exerting themſelves in the manner its greatneſs and proximity ſo evidently required. Miniſtry foreſaw the ſtorm that was coming upon them from all quarters; they knew themſelves unable to face the difficulties to which they had expoſed the kingdom from abroad, and they dreaded the account that would be demanded from them at home. In this dilemma their perplexity was ſuch, that they ſeized every pretext to put off the evil hour; but it would arrive, and would even gather double ſtrength from this imprudent delay. The ſooner it was faced, the eaſier it would be met. It was raſh to procraſtinate thoſe deliberations which a few weeks, perhaps a few days, would enforce upon them; it was weak to put off thoſe diſcuſſions, which, however diſagreeable, they muſt ſoon or late ſubmit to.

The miniſterial anſwer was, that a longer continuance of the ſeſſion would be of no utility in

the main point propoſed at preſent, which was the preparations requiſite for the defence of the nation againſt any foreign attacks. As to debates and examinations, enough of them would ariſe in the inquiry already agreed upon. Meaſures reſpecting America could not be taken till the ſituation of affairs in that country was laid before them, in a clear and explicit manner. Till then, it would be nugatory to propoſe any thing deciſive on that ſubject, or upon any other that was connected with it. It would be time when mature intelligence was arrived, to proceed to thoſe conceſſions and arrangements regarding the Colonies, that might be found proper and equitable.

To this reply, oppoſition rejoined with great vehemence, that whatever treaties might be entered into with America, the preſent miniſtry had no right to imagine the Colonies would conſent to treat with men who had uſed them with ſo much duplicity, and whoſe real intentions they were too experimentally acquainted with, to place any confidence in their profeſſions of friendſhip. Miniſtry ſtood reſpecting America in the worſt of all political ſituations; they were neither feared nor eſteemed. It was not, therefore, for ſuch men to talk of negociating with thoſe who would not truſt them: ſuch miſtruſt was of itſelf a ſufficient obſtacle to their conſenting to any treaty.

The preparations carrying on for the ſecurity of the realm, were, it was ſaid, dwelt upon by miniſtry with much more ſatisfaction to themſelves, than to the judicious part of the nation. They ought to have taken place, and uſe of them ought to have been made long ago, had miniſtry acted conſiſtently with the plan they had adopted for America. But their infatuation was ſuch, as to deride the fundamental principles of polilics, and ignorantly to flatter themſelves that France and Spain would be ſo unmind-

unmindful of what they conſidered as their intereſt, as to remain inactive ſpectators of the moſt favourable opportunity that could ever have ariſen of breaking the ſtrength of their capital and moſt dangerous enemy.

In the eagerneſs of their purſuits, miniſtry had thrown away all thoſe conſiderations which other politicians had thought neceſſary to keep in view. It had been uſual with former miniſtries, in compliance with the general dictates of prudence, to form ſuch connections as might co-operate in their ſchemes, and prove a ſupport, in caſe of need. But Britain, through the incapacity and ſelf-ſufficiency of its preſent rulers, was deſtitute of any allies that could deſerve ſuch a name. The miniſtry would not ſurely have the confidence to beſtow that appellation on thoſe Princes whoſe troops we had hired. We were abſolutely an abandoned and forlorn people, ſurrounded by open and ſecret enemies, and hardly poſſeſſing the good wiſhes of any ſtate in Europe.

With theſe, and many other allegations of the ſame kind, did the oppoſers of miniſtry combat the motion of adjournment; but it was carried, upon a diviſion, by one hundred and fifty-five votes, againſt ſixty-eight.

In the Houſe of Peers, beſides ſome motions by the Lords in oppoſition, conformable to thoſe made by the ſame party in the Houſe of Commons, Lord Chatham moved, that copies of the orders and inſtructions to General Burgoyne ſhould be laid before them. In the ſpeech with which he accompanied this motion, he repreſented the conduct of miniſtry in the moſt odious light. He arraigned, in a particular manner, the meanneſs and degeneracy prevailing among thoſe, who, from the eminence of their rank, ought to be above all influence. To this baſe and ſelfiſh diſpoſition, he aſcribed the diſunion of this country, the miſtruſt of

all men for each other, the diſſolving of all connections, and the enmity now brought about between thoſe who were formerly bound together by the ſame views. Inſtead of that open, manly rule of acting, which rendered individuals reſpectable to each other, however they might differ in their political principles, a clandeſtine, inſidious ſpirit of intrigue had gone forth, deſtructive of every principle of integrity, and which tended ultimately to eradicate all thoſe ſentiments upon which alone men ought to value themſelves.

This degeneracy of mind had, he ſaid, infected all parts of the community; it was found among the loweſt, as well as the higheſt orders. As theſe ſtood neareſt that miniſterial fountain of corruption, which contaminated almoſt all thoſe who approached it, they were accordingly the moſt guilty. To theſe he attributed the calamities that were afflicting every part of the Britiſh empire. It was owing to their paſſive acquieſcence, that individuals unworthy of truſt and confidence, were precipitating it to ruin.

A ſyſtem, he continued, had been lately taken up by an ill-deſigning, perfidious ſet of men, whoſe aim was to ſow the ſeeds of diſcord among all the principal people in the kingdom. Their ſyſtem was to engroſs all authority and power, by fomenting diviſions among thoſe individuals whoſe merit and character entitled them to pre-eminence. By ſuch treacherous arts, the minds of many who were upright and well intentioned, were alienated from each other, and prevented from that cordial aſſociation of intereſts and ideas, which is ſo neceſſary in the formation of a permanent and reſpectable government.

Miniſtry anſwered the charges againſt them with equal warmth. That of improper influence was denied with much vehemence. They were influenced by

by no other motive than that of conviction of the propriety of their conduct. It was an eaſy and popular taſk to accuſe men of being led by private views; but proofs were not ſo readily produced. They had done their duty to the utmoſt of their knowledge; they had ſtood up for the dignity of the crown and kingdom of Great Britain; they ſtill continued to think it beneath the majeſty of the Britiſh legiſlature, to be forced into conceſſions of which it did not approve. In a ſtruggle between this country and its Colonies, it was the part of a native of Britain to eſpouſe its cauſe preferably to theirs. But the maxims of oppoſition were quite of a contradictory caſt, and inculcated the ſacrifice of this country's intereſt to that of its Colonies.

After a violent conteſt, wherein great aſperity of language had been uſed on either ſide, the queſtion being put, Lord Chatham's motion was rejected by a majority of forty votes to nineteen.

Not diſcouraged by this rejection, he made a ſecond motion for an addreſs to lay before the Houſe, the orders and directions relating to the employment of the Indians.

The extreme ſeverity with which he reprobated this meaſure, was highly offenſive to thoſe who ſided with adminiſtration. After aſſigning various reaſons for adopting it, they charged Lord Chatham himſelf with having ſet them the example in the laſt war.

To this it was replied, that the employment of the Indians at that time, was a meaſure of the greateſt propriety:—It was no more than a neceſſary retaliation upon the French, who made uſe of their aſſiſtance in a much greater degree: it was therefore perfectly juſtifiable by the laws of nations. But the preſent employment of theſe barbarians had nothing to authoriſe it; and was dictated by an un-

manly ſpirit of revenge. This motion was negatived in the ſame manner as the preceding.

When the queſtion of adjournment came to be agitated, it occaſioned no leſs heat and altercation than in the Houſe of Commons. In the vehemence of debate it was inſinuated, that the opinions and advice of perſons in the oppoſition, merited no influence in the councils of this kingdom, from their total deficiency in that ſpirit and fortitude which had always characteriſed the nation. The reply was, that the imprudence of the preſent miniſters, their obſtinacy, their ignorance in the firſt principles of government, were all notoriouſly proved by the diſappointments, the loſſes, the misfortunes daily experienced abroad, and the dangers to which the realm was evidently expoſed at home. Miſtaking raſhneſs for ſpirit, they had plunged this country into calamities, ſome of which were irretrievable. Could ſuch men deſerve the confidence unhappily repoſed in them, after having ſo repeatedly diſgraced thoſe councils, wherein they had the arrogance to preſume that none but themſelves were worthy of having a ſhare?

After a long and acrimonious debate, attended alternately with ſeveral taunts of this nature, the motion for the adjournment paſſed by a majority of forty-ſeven to ſeventeen.

CHAP. XXXI.

Tranſactions in Great Britain relating to America.

1777—1778.

DURING the long and unexpected receſs that divided this memorable ſeſſion, many domeſtic events happened of a nature to claim the attention, and exerciſe the animoſities of both parties.

The American deputies at Paris, had ineffectually endeavoured to ſettle an exchange of priſoners, on the footing uſually eſtabliſhed between nations at war, with the Britiſh Ambaſſador at the Court of France. They wrote a letter of complaint upon this ſubject to the miniſtry at London. It contained a charge of a heavy nature, and which occaſioned many complaints from thoſe who did not approve of ſeverities being inflicted upon the American priſoners, beyond thoſe to which individuals captured in war are reciprocally ſubject.

It repreſented that a number of American priſoners had been ſent to the Coaſt of Africa and to the Eaſt Indies, to ſerve as ſoldiers there, againſt their will, and in order to avoid worſe treatment. Whatever truth or exaggeration were contained in this remonſtrance, it produced much diſcontent among the partiſans of America.

Repreſentations were made at the ſame time, that the American priſoners in England were uſed with much more rigour than was conſiſtent with humanity; that they were in great want and diſtreſs, through the barbarous neglect of thoſe who were appointed to the care and management of the priſons wherein they were confined.

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The caſe of theſe unhappy people, was, with great humanity, brought before the conſideration of the Houſe of Lords, by the Earl of Abingdon. He propoſed that an equiry ſhould be made relative to their complaints, and that due care ſhould be taken to ſcreen them from ill uſage. This, together with a very liberal ſubſcription in their favour throughout the kingdom, relieved them from their diſtreſſes, and did honour to the character of the nation.

In the mean time, the misfortune that had attended the army under General Burgoyne, was become an object of very ſerious conſideration. Though it was to return to England, yet it was to remain uſeleſs for the purpoſe for which it had been intended. Until another army of equal force could be provided, one of the moſt important objects of the American war was of neceſſity to be neglected. An additional aggravation to this calamity, was the danger to which the Province of Canada was again expoſed, from the attacks of the people of New England. It was highly probable they would not forego this opportunity of invading it, while enfeebled by the loſs of ſuch a conſiderable force, and in all likelihood unable to reſiſt ſuch a one, as they would have it in their power to employ againſt it.

But it was not only the mortification of being deprived of the ſervice of this army in America, that perplexed the miniſtry: it was almoſt equally chagrined at the little progreſs made even by the victories obtained in other parts, towards the objects propoſed. It viewed with equal concern and ſurprize, a brave General, at the head of a ſucceſsful army, obliged to act with the ſame circumſpection in the midſt of conqueſt, as if he had been defeated, and been obliged to take refuge in that city, of which his advantages over the enemy had, in fact, given him the poſſeſſion.

This was a ſituation totally new and highly embarraſſing.—It ſhewed that there was a radical chain of difficulties in the enterprize before them, which threatened to be indiſſoluble; as ſoon as one was overcome, another ſtarted up. The nature of both country and people ſeemed to correſpond in this reſpect: whatever ſtraits they had been reduced to, ſtill they had found means to ſurmount them againſt all expectation, and when they were looked upon as paſt all poſſibility of deliverance.

Another obſtacle began at this period to ſhew itſelf, which occaſioned no leſs alarm. This was the difficulty of recruiting the troops in America. Excluſive of the immenſe diſtance of the ſcene of war, and of the enormous expence of ſending armies acroſs the ocean to another hemiſphere, the queſtion now was, where to provide a ſufficiency of men to replace thoſe multitudes that fell in battle, or were loſt through the many other cauſes that concurred to their deſtruction.

The recruiting parties in Great Britain and Ireland, found no alteration in the temper of the commonalty; the ſame averſion ſtill ſubſiſted to engage in the ſervice, with the proſpect of being ſent to America.

In Germany various obſtructions were daily ariſing to prevent ſupplies of ſoldiers from that quarter. The immenſe armies kept on foot by the two principal powers in that part of Europe, the Emperor, and the King of Pruſſia, demanded continual levies throughout the empire. It was not therefore without jealouſy, that both theſe powers ſaw ſome of the reſources diminiſhed, from whence they were uſed to refreſh their armies. One of them actually denied a paſſage through his dominions, to a body of men that had been raiſed for the ſervice of Britain; and a general unwillingneſs appeared every where to countenance

countenance any aſſiſtance that might be afforded to this country.

The proſpect nearer home was not leſs productive of anxiety. Intelligence was daily arriving of the prodigious preparations that were haſtening in every port of France. The American privateers were now welcomed in ſuch a manner, as indicated how ſoon their country would receive that full and explicit ſupport for which it had ſo long ſolicited.

Occurrences of various kinds contributed to ſhow with what heartineſs the French eſpouſed the cauſe of the Americans. Theſe were received, careſſed, and feaſted by individuals of all degrees, in the harbours into which they conducted their prizes: they were treated on the footing of the moſt cordial friends and allies, and conſidered as men embarked in the ſame quarrel againſt one common enemy.

Theſe various objects made no alteration in the councils of this kingdom. The plan of conquering America ſtill continued in full force. It ſeemed to be reſolved, that no diſappointment ſhould ſhake the reſolutions taken to that purpoſe, and that no ſituation, however diſtreſſing, ſhould compel this country to yield to any other terms than thoſe it had at firſt propoſed.

In order to ſupport ſo reſolute a determination, it was neceſſary to make ſuch a proviſion of internal ſtrength, as might enable the nation to withſtand all attempts from its neighbours, as well as to continue its exertions on the other ſide of the Atlantic.

The dangers which the realm apprehended from the Houſe of Bourbon, would not permit the ſending out any more troops to America, till thoſe remaining at home had been duly replaced in the different poſts and garriſons, where they were ſtationed for the defence of the kingdom; and from whence it would have been highly imprudent to remove them at ſo critical a juncture.

The

The indiſpenſible neceſſity of making new levies, and the difficulty of carrying ſuch a meaſure into execution, were equally obvious. Parliament, however obſequious it had proved hitherto, did not appear ſo willing to go the ſame lengths in hoſtile meaſures, ſince the unhappy failure of the expedition under General Burgoyne. Many of thoſe who had warmly coincided with coercive meaſures, began to deſpair of their efficacy. Even among the miniſtry, there were ſome who expreſſed much leſs fervour in their proſecution ſince that unfortunate event.

To purſue effectually the ends propoſed, a conſiderable force was to be raiſed within the kingdom itſelf, excluſive of thoſe ſupplies of men that were furniſhed from foreign parts. The preſſure of circumſtances rendered ſuch an attempt inevitable; but that obſtacle which appeared of moſt magnitude, was how to compaſs ſuch an intention, without applying to Parliament, and without offending it.

It was ſuggeſted upon this occaſion, that an application might be made without impropriety, to that numerous party which had in ſo many parts of the kingdom, ſhewn themſelves the ſtrenuous abettors and ſupporters of thoſe councils that had promoted coercive meaſures. The warmth and vigour profeſſed and recommended by this party, were notorious, and afforded no ill-founded preſumption, that if called upon to ſecond their words by their deeds, they would not be found remiſs.

Were ſuch an application to ſucceed, it would open the moſt flattering proſpects. It would create a new reſource for the military liſt. It would diminiſh the expence of levying men, which was no inconſiderable one; it would revive the martial ſpirit of the nation, which, though naturally bold and intrepid, was in general averſe to the military profeſſion. A diffuſion of this ſpirit was become the

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more neceſſary, as the dangers threatened from abroad would ere long, probably, oblige the people of this iſland to have recourſe to arms themſelves, in a greater degree than had been requiſite for many years.

It might perhaps be objected, that ſuch a meaſure would diminiſh the numbers of individuals employed in thoſe branches of buſineſs, that were productive of ſuch immenſe profits to the nation. But this was an argument equally applicable to all countries. Were motives of this nature to preponderate in all caſes, they would baniſh at laſt all ſentiments of honour and magnanimity, and infallibly terminate in rendering a people ſpiritleſs and incapable of ſelf-defence, which was the worſt calamity that could befall them.

Such a meaſure might poſſibly affect the well-being of a country, that had nothing to depend on but what was imported from abroad, and acquired through the greateſt efforts of domeſtic induſtry. But this was by no means the caſe of Great Britain. It was a large, fertile, and populous iſland, full of all the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life, and abounding in brave and reſolute men, a great proportion of whom were far from being indiſpenſibly needed for the purpoſes of external commerce, or inland trade.

But were ſome inconveniency to reſult from the employment of our own people, it would be only temporary. The end for which it was ſubmitted to, would amply compenſate for the inconſiderable deficiencies it might for a while occaſion. Other nations were ſubject to ſuch inconveniencies, and ſome were leſs able to endure them than ourſelves. The enemies that now compelled us to adopt this meaſure from the juſt apprehenſions we entertained of their malevolent deſigns, were preciſely in our own ſituation. Their military ſtrength conſiſted of their own people; however extenſive their commercial views,

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and the many ſchemes they had at different periods projected for the enlargement of their numerous branches of trade, ſtill they thought it the wiſeſt policy, to put as few arms as poſſible into the hands of mercenaries, and to truſt the honour and ſafety of their country to the care and courage of the natives.

Theſe conſiderations, together with the preſſingneſs of the occaſion, induced thoſe who principally directed among the miniſtry, to make trial of the temper and diſpoſition of their numerous adherents. It was chiefly to prevent this trial from being obſtructed, that ſo early a receſs had been reſolved. Had it taken place while the Houſes were ſitting, oppoſition might have been ſo inimical to it, as to have fruſtrated the whole ſcheme. It could not be denied, that it ſeemed to deviate from the conſtitutional method of raiſing a military force. The rigid aſſertors of the rights of Parliament, would probably repreſent it as an incroachment on their privileges: this might induce ſuch members as were otherwiſe inclined to favour the views of miniſtry reſpecting America, to take ſuch an alarm, as to throw their whole weight on this emergency into the ſcale of oppoſition.

For this reaſon, a receſs of more than common duration, appeared abſolutely requiſite to give time for the intended experiment to operate without interruption. Should it prove ſucceſsful, as there was ſtrong reaſon to hope it would, the neceſſity of the times would be a powerful argument in its juſtification, and ſilence the objections which at another ſeaſon would be heard to its prejudice.

The determination being thus ſettled, thoſe friends to miniſtry whoſe attachment could be moſt relied on, and whoſe influence or abilities could be moſt ſerviceable, were employed in thoſe places where their

their reſpective intereſt lay to prepare the minds of the people for what was intended.

The expectations formed by miniſtry, were anſwered beyond what the moſt ſanguine had dared to preſage. The connections that had taken place between France and the Colonies, made a conſiderable alteration in the diſpoſitions of people. Many who had once been their zealous friends, were now become their foes from that circumſtance alone. Convinced that they would, from the nature of their country, have been able to reſiſt the endeavours of Britain to ſubdue them, they thought that they needed no other aſſiſtance; and that to have recourſe to the inveterate enemies of this country, betrayed a malevolent diſpoſition, and was dictated by choice much more than by neceſſity.

In this perſuaſion were multitudes throughout the kingdom, when this application was made by the miniſterial party, in the ſeveral towns where they poſſeſſed influence and credit, either by their property, or their connections with people in buſineſs.

Among thoſe places that ſeconded the views of miniſtry, Liverpool and Mancheſter ſtood the foremoſt. They acted with a zeal that gave ſpirit at once to the whole undertaking, and filled its well-wiſhers with the moſt ſanguine hope of carrying it through to the utmoſt of the extent propoſed. They each engaged to raiſe a complete regiment of a thouſand men. The ſame alacrity was diſplayed in various other places; and numerous ſubſcriptions were opened almoſt every where for the levying and embodying of men for the public ſervice.

It would have afforded great ſatisfaction to the miniſtry, could the city of London have been prevailed on to take the lead in a meaſure of this kind. The vaſt aſſiſtance it could have given, the weight of its countenance, the influence of its example, would have powerfully contributed to forward and authoriſe

authoriſe it in the moſt effectual manner. But the differences that had of late years ariſen between the Court and City relating to America, had alienated them from each other, and produced a coolneſs bordering upon enmity.

Motives were not however wanting to induce the miniſtry to make a trial there. The manifold branches of buſineſs connected with the carrying on of the war, and eſpecially the prodigious contracts with government, had procured it an extenſive influence ever ſince the commencement of hoſtilities.

The friends of government in the city had formed themſelves into a body, to which they gave the name of the Aſſociated Livery; but they were better known by that of the White Hart Aſſociation, from the tavern where their meetings were held.—They were at this period very numerous, and exerciſed great ſway in the city, from the power they had of obliging or detrimenting individuals in trade.

There were other ſocieties framed by the popular party, in oppoſition to this; but they met with ſo many diſcouragements, and were ſo diſunited, that they were entirely overborne by the ſuperior weight of their antagoniſts. Theſe acted more under guidance and direction, and were ſupported by the whole ſtrength of miniſtry: while the former, profeſſing the utmoſt independence of principle and conduct, were apt frequently to be at variance; the latter, through pliancy and acquieſcence in the dictates of their leaders, were kept more firmly together, and acquired that preponderance which is the natural reſult of concert and unanimity.

The heads of this powerful body were carefully applied to on this important occaſion, and much reliance was placed on the exertions they were able to make. They themſelves doubted not their ſufficiency to carry the point propoſed. Full of this

confidence, they advertiſed a meeting of their aſſociates, depending on ſo general and efficient a ſupport, as to bring it about with little, if any oppoſition.

But the misfortunes that had lately befallen the Britiſh arms in America, the unproſperous aſpect of the military operations there, the continual diſappointments attending every miniſterial meaſure, and the imminent danger in which the proſecution of their deſigns had involved the nation; all theſe had of late made ſuch an impreſſion on the public, that an averſeneſs to the American war had taken poſſeſſion of the minds of far the greater majority of thoſe on whom they had ſo confidently relied.

In conſequence of this diſpoſition, the meeting, contrary to their expectation, was but thinly attended; and to their utter aſtoniſhment, ſuch as were preſent, manifeſted ſo little inclination to correſpond with their intentions, that upon weighing the matter ſeriouſly among themſelves, they did not judge proper to lay the real intent of the meeting before thoſe who compoſed it, and it ſeparated without the leaſt tranſaction of any buſineſs.

The propoſal intended by miniſtry was, that the city of London ſhould raiſe and maintain five thouſand men, who were to ſerve three years, or till the concluſion of the war. But the manner in which their agents were diſappointed at this meeting, diſcouraged theſe ſo much, that at a Court which was called by the Lord Mayor upon this occaſion, no mention was made of this tendency, and it was only moved, that a bounty ſhould be granted by the city to thoſe who enliſted into the ſervice, either by ſea or land.

Various arguments were adduced in ſupport of the motion. The danger with which this country was menaced by its moſt powerful and inveterate enemies, rendered it an indiſpenſible duty in the metro-

metropolis of the British empire to prove its ardour in the common cause, by exerting itself in the most vigorous and exemplary manner for the service of the state. The losses we had lately suffered in America, and the necessity of reducing that country to obedience, called for every assistance which a brave and generous people could possibly afford. In such a critical season as the present, every individual ought chearfully to contribute to the utmost of his abilities. The city of London had always acted a conspicuous part on such occasions, and it behoved its inhabitants not to fall short of the spirited precedents set them by their ancestors.

This exhortation had no effect upon the assembly. It was replied, that it was totally inconsistent to apply to the city of London for its support of measures which it had so long, and so lately disapproved of, in the most explicit and most unreserved manner. That having invariably recommended peace and reconciliation, it was an insult to request its concurrence in war and bloodshed. It had sustained so much damage from the conduct of ministry, and experience had so fully convinced all discerning people of their unfitness to direct the affairs of this nation, that the city of London was the last place where they should seek for abettors. True it was, the citizens of this metropolis had always stood forth in dangerous times, and signalized themselves in defence of their country; but this was under wise councils and able ministers. The same motives that influenced their behaviour on such occasions, now induced them to deny their assistance to those who requested it. They had freely and zealously granted it to those who deserved it; and would for the same reason refuse it to such as were unworthy of it.

In the Court of Aldermen, eleven members supported this motion against nine, who rejected it.

But in the Common Council, it was thrown out by a majority of one hundred and eighty, to no more than thirty.

Notwithſtanding this heavy diſappointment, the miniſterial party continued firm in their determination not to give up the point. The want of loyalty in the Corporation of London, ſhould not, they ſaid, prevent individuals from teſtifying it in their private capacity. While ſubſcriptions were encouraged for the Americans taken with arms in their hands againſt this country, it was but juſt that thoſe who were well affected to government ſhould alſo ſubſcribe to its ſupport.

In conſequence of this determination, a ſubſcription was opened at the London Tavern, and a Committee choſen to manage the buſineſs. As the whole of this affair was conducted by perſons in affluent circumſtances, a large ſum was ſoon ſubſcribed.

The adherents to miniſtry at Briſtol imitated thoſe at London, and were foiled preciſely in the ſame manner. They acted alſo with no leſs zeal after their public failure. They opened ſubſcriptions, and filled them with a liberality exceeding that of London, when the proportions of wealth and importance between thoſe two cities are taken into conſideration.

Similar attempts were made for the ſervice of government in different counties, with no better ſucceſs. In Norfolk particularly, the oppoſition to miniſtry was ſo powerful, that inſtead of procuring any aſſiſtance, the endeavours of their friends occaſioned a petition to Parliament from the freeholders of that county, conceived in terms of the higheſt energy and freedom, and wherein they reprobated the American war with the utmoſt expliciteſs and aſperity.

In Scotland, a remarkable readineſs was ſhown in concurring with the deſigns of government. The

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martial ſpirit of the Scotch nation prompted it to very vigorous exertions upon this occaſion. The cities of Edinburgh and Glaſgow, beſides large ſubſcriptions, furniſhed each a regiment of a thouſand men. Several regiments were alſo raiſed in the Highlands.

Theſe free ſubſcriptions, and voluntary levies of men, did not take place, however, without the ſevereſt animadverſions from thoſe who diſapproved of them. Their number was very conſiderable: they did not deny the exigency of the times; but they condemned without reſerve the manner of proceeding which had been adopted, and repreſented it as pregnant with conſequences of a very pernicious tendency.

This meaſure was the very firſt object that met with the cenſure of oppoſition on the meeting of Parliament after the receſs. Sir Philip Jennings Clerke began the inquiry into this buſineſs, by obſerving, that as the people of this country had been told that the American war was the war of Parliament, they could not fail being greatly alarmed at hearing that a large body of men had been raiſed during the receſs, not only without the knowledge or advice of Parliament, but without intimation being given on the part of miniſtry that any ſuch deſign was in agitation.

Parliament had, on the contrary, been informed, that terms of reconciliation to be propoſed to the Colonies, would be laid before them at their next meeting. But inſtead of a treaty for the reſtoring of peace, miniſtry met the Parliament with a new army; and what was worſe, an army raiſed without the conſent of Parliament, and againſt both the ſpirit and letter of the conſtitution.

The object of Parliamentary inquiry at preſent, was to know into whoſe hands the ſword was entruſted? However neceſſary it might be to raiſe troops, it

was the duty of Parliament to ſee that the ſword ſhould be given to thoſe only upon whoſe fidelity they could rely.

He moved, in conſequence, that an account ſhould be laid before the Houſe of the number of troops ordered to be raiſed during the late adjournment, ſpecifying the different corps, with the names of their officers and commanders, the length of time theſe had ſerved, and the rank they had obtained in the army.

The motion was acceded to on the part of miniſtry, and the Houſe informed at the ſame time, that the intention of the long adjournment which had taken place, had been fully anſwered, by the activity that had been exerted in the various departments of the public ſervice, and by the zeal and readineſs with which great numbers in the nation had contributed to forward it in their private capacity. Free and ſpontaneous ſubſcriptions had been opened in various places, for the exigencies of the ſtate at this critical time. They were a ſeaſonable proof how much true patriotiſm remained in this nation, and they ſhowed no leſs an approbation of the conduct of miniſtry. It was with particular ſatisfaction that miniſters now ſaw, that untoward accidents had not affected the good opinion of the public reſpecting the rectitude of their meaſures; and that croſſes and diſappointments were viewed in their true light, as contingencies independent on human ſagacity. Every man who felt for the reputation of this country, muſt rejoice to ſee the courage of the people augment in proportion with their difficulties and dangers. Such a diſpoſition muſt, in the iſſue, render them invincible.

Oppoſition contended, on the other hand, that however flattering a repreſentation miniſtry might think proper to make of the meaſure in queſtion, it was a direct attack upon the conſtitution, and was

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replete with danger. Were it otherwiſe, why ſhould it ſo induſtriouſly have been concealed from Parliament? Why ſhould miniſtry recur to ſo unuſual a receſs, but in order to execute it without obſtruction? They were conſcious how ſtrongly it muſt have been oppoſed, and did not dare to truſt to Parliament for its conſent to ſo unwarrantable a deſign.

Were the executive power in this kingdom authoriſed in raiſing ſuch a number of troops without the concurrence of Parliament, the fences of popular liberty would immediately be broken down. It was an eaſy matter to frame pretexts for levying or increaſing the number of forces; but were maxims of this kind once admitted, ſuch armies would be raiſed, as would ſoon introduce that arbitrary government in this country, which had been eſtabliſhed in ſo many parts of Europe preciſely by the ſame means.

The plea of neceſſity, founded on the dangerous ſtate of the nation, and the war now waging in America, was an object of Parliamentary deciſion only. They were the ſole judges whether the money of the nation ſhould be granted for the purpoſes pleaded by miniſtry: it was their ancient, unalienable right. Through venality, through undue influence, miniſters might pervert the repreſentatives of the people, and draw what ſums they pleaſed from the public; but ſtill they ought to beware of departing from long eſtabliſhed forms. Repreſentatives, however pliant, would ſtill inſiſt on being conſulted as uſual, and would not give up that privilege, however improperly they might uſe it.

Miniſtry had, in this inſtance, been guilty of a manifeſt and notorious breach of the conſtitution; they had aſſumed a power which belonged to Parliament excluſively,—that of granting the public money. They had incurred expences on account of the public, and which, of courſe, the public muſt

they had done it without the participation of Parliament, and for aught they knew, againſt its inclination.

In anſwer to theſe objections, it was alledged by miniſtry, that the preſſures of the times were ſo great, that none but captious and unreaſonable men would condemn a meaſure evidently ſo uſeful and beneficial. The ſenſe of the nation was, that the American war ſhould be proſecuted with all imaginable vigour. Could a meaſure that ſeconded this intention ſo effectually, be conſtrued as dangerous to the liberty of a people with whoſe wiſhes it ſo directly correſponded?

The withholding it from the knowledge of Parliament, was no ſubject of reprehenſion: miniſters themſelves were but partially acquainted with the ſcope and extent of the meaſure, and could not in its undigeſted ſtate bring it as a matter of diſcuſſion before Parliament.

The accuſation of unlawfulneſs and infringement of the privileges of Parliament, was unjuſt, and ill-founded. The meaſures carried on in America, had been approved of in a manner perfectly conſtitutional: could the concurrence of the people in furthering the views of their repreſentatives, be conſidered in any light as repugnant to the conſtitution?

The tranſaction, inſtead of meeting with blame, ought to be treated with commendation; nothing ſiniſter accompanied it. The plain, unequivocal intent of thoſe who acted upon this occaſion, could not poſſibly be any other than to render their country all the ſervices in their power. Warmth in the cauſe of Great Britain againſt the pretenſions and behaviour of the Colonies, had roufed the ſpirit of multitudes throughout the nation to uncommon exertions in its defence, and in the maintenance of its

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honour and juſt claims; was there any reprehenſibleneſs in a caſe of this nature? Was not ſuch a tranſaction highly conducive to the reputation of a people? Was it not a proof of their magnanimity in the hour of danger, of their attachment to government, and of their ſtrongeſt approbation of thoſe who directed its councils?

Precedents militated powerfully in ſupport of the meaſure:—In the rebellion of ſeventeen hundred and forty-five, ſeveral Noblemen and Commoners raiſed troops at their own expence; ſubſcriptions were openly ſet on foot, and perſons went from houſe to houſe, collecting money for the uſe of the public. No compulſion was employed, but ſuch was the temper of the times, that whoever refuſed to contribute according to his circumſtances, was reputed a diſloyal ſubject. The meaſure was oppoſed by the diſaffected party of that period, and, like the preſent, condemned as unconſtitutional; but it was no leſs ſtrenuouſly vindicated by one of the greateſt luminaries of the law, the late Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, who was well known to be a ſtaunch friend to the conſtitution of this country.

During the late triumphant war, ſeveral regiments had been raiſed by the Crown, and large ſums ſubſcribed by the city of London, and other places, for the levying of troops. This was done under the miniſtry of Mr. Pitt, now Lord Chatham, whoſe conſtitutional principles were unqueſtionable. The meaſure, inſtead of meeting with the leaſt diſapprobation, was highly applauded by Parliament, and thoſe who engaged in it received the public thanks of government.

Neither the Bill of Rights, nor the Mutiny Act itſelf, it was aſſerted by ſeveral lawyers of great eminence, were contrary to this meaſure: no conſtruction of them could imply a legal diſability in the Crown to uſe proper means for the defence of the

the realm, in caſes of great exigency. Theſe neceſſarily ſuperſeded the common forms. Were theſe to be literally adhered to, without any reſpect to circumſtances, they might eventually prove the ruin of the ſtate. Contributions, while voluntary, could not be deemed unconſtitutional. Were they not even ſtrictly conformable to the letter of the law, yet their meaning and intent were perfectly conſiſtent with the ſpirit of the conſtitution. They were given to quell a rebellion, which was the greateſt of all civil calamities, and in the ſuppreſſion of which all means were juſtifiable.

It was anſwered by oppoſition, that the precedents alledged in juſtification of the meaſure, were not appoſite to the preſent caſe. When the public was in manifeſt and imminent danger, neceſſity might excuſe a deviation from formalities. By this rule only, the proceedings in the rebellion of forty-five could be authoriſed. The realm, the conſtitution, the liberties of the nation, were then evidently at ſtake; the rebel army was advancing towards the capital, and the diſaffected were numerous, and every where preparing to riſe. In ſuch perilous circumſtances, a tranſient ſuſpenſion of the laws became neceſſary for their preſervation, and every method adopted for the ſecurity of the ſtate was juſt and reaſonable.

But what compariſon could be formed between that and the preſent inſtance? The enemy againſt whom theſe new levied forces were deſigned, was ſituated in another hemiſphere; a large fleet was infeſting his coaſt, and a numerous army was invading the heart of his country. Could any preſſing danger be pleaded from ſuch an enemy? Could ſuch a caſe authoriſe miniſtry to adjourn a Parliament clearly to the intent of acting without its advice?

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What happened in the commencement of the laſt war, was not more favourable to the miniſterial pretenſions:—The regiments then raiſed by the Crown, were authoriſed by Parliament. An act of credit had been paſſed, enabling the King to take ſuch meaſures as were proper for the common defence, and addreſſes had been preſented to the ſame purport.

The money ſubſcribed at that time was not applied to the levying of forces independent of Parliament, but to grant enliſting bounties to recruits for the army, and ſeamen for the navy. But in the preſent caſe, fifteen or ſixteen thouſand men were to be levied, without any interference of Parliament; and an aſſembly of men, unauthoriſed for ſuch a purpoſe, aſſumed the power of granting money to the miniſtry, to be diſpoſed of at its own option, and free from all Parliamentary controul.

The Bill of Rights did by no means allow money to be raiſed for the uſe of the Crown, otherwiſe than by grant from Parliament. But the caſe now debated was a direct contravention of that bill; money was granted to the Crown without the leaſt intervention of Parliament, for the moſt dangerous of all purpoſes,—the raiſing of troops without Parliamentary authority.

This donation of money to the Crown from private individuals, had always been conſidered as a dangerous method of ſupplying the wants of the ſovereign. Even thoſe Parliaments, whoſe loyalty and attachment to the perſons of their Princes were the leaſt queſtionable, had been cautious to reſtrain theſe voluntary gifts within ſtated limits. On the reſtoration of Charles the Second, when all orders of ſubjects were eager to teſtify their affection to him by voluntary contributions of money, Parliament foreſeeing the pernicious tendency of ſuch a proceeding, fixed a term after which they were

were to ceaſe, and a ſum which they were not to exceed. The generoſity of a Peer was not to extend beyond four hundred pounds, and that of a Commoner above two hundred.

It was particularly noticed by oppoſition, that this meaſure contradicted an argument often alledged in vindication of the excluſive right claimed by Parliament to tax the Colonies :—Were they to be allowed to grant money to the crown, it would in time become independent of Parliament for ſupplies, and the conſtitution of this country be materially endangered : this was an argument reiteratedly adduced in defence of the miniſterial proceedings in the Colonies : it was uſed both in and out of Parliament by all their partiſans, as an unanſwerable proof of the judiciouſneſs of their conduct, in ſuffering no other aſſembly of men throughout the Britiſh empire, to levy money for the uſe of the crown. With what face, therefore, could miniſtry, after pleading that motive for debarring the Provincial Aſſemblies in America from granting aids to the crown by virtue of their own authority, pretend to legalize the opening of ſubſcriptions, by private individuals, for the benefit of the crown ?

The expreſs intention of the Mutiny Act, was to prevent the crown from maintaining an army without the aſſiſtance of Parliament; but if the means of maintaining it were permitted to be furniſhed through any other than a parliamentary channel, the act might ſoon be invalidated, and its intention wholly fruſtrated.

Gifts to the crown, from whatever ſource they flowed, could not be conſidered in any other light than that of aids, when given for public uſes ; they were therefore a manifeſt breach of the rights of Parliament, which had reſerved to itſelf excluſively, the ſole privilege of ſupplying the wants of the crown. The connection between Crown and Parliament was founded

founded upon that privilege; were any other body of ſubjects, public or private, allowed to participate it, of what utility could Parliament prove in the moſt eſſential of all its concerns,—the protection of public liberty? If others were authoriſed to give or to raiſe money for the crown without conſulting them, it was obvious that ways enough might be found to levy ſufficient ſums for the furtherance of unconſtitutional deſigns.

This method of obtaining money from the public, had always been condemned by the ſoundeſt lawyers. When it ſubſiſted under the title of benevolence, it was in fact a tyrannical extortion, and wiſe men ſaw the neceſſity of putting a ſtop to the practice, whatever appellation it might aſſume. Contributions of this kind, though voluntary, perhaps, and uncompelled at firſt, ſoon ſlid into precedents; and from requeſts, became in time requiſitions, to which people were bound to ſubmit. For this reaſon the wiſdom of Parliament thought fit to ſuppreſs them by two ſucceſſive acts framed for that particular purpoſe.

An attempt, reſembling the method of obtaining money practiſed by the preſent miniſtry, had been made in the time of James the Firſt; but though no compulſion was uſed, and people were left entirely to their option, the meaſure underwent a ſevere reprehenſion from one of the ableſt lawyers of that age, the celebrated St. John, afterwards Lord Chief Juſtice. He had the courage, at a time when adulation was more prevalent than it has been ever ſince, to oppoſe it with undaunted firmneſs. He expreſſed himſelf on this occaſion with ſuch freedom of language, as laid him open to a proſecution in the Star Chamber. It was carried on with great violence, and every means were employed to bring him to a heavy condemnation; but he maintained his ground with ſo much judgment and fortitude,

that

that notwithſtanding the whole intereſt of the Court was exerted againſt him, he was acquitted, and thereby eſtabliſhed a remarkable and deciſive precedent of the illegality of ſuch a method of raiſing money.

The plan obſerved in levying theſe new regiments, was at the ſame time complained of as expenſive, injudicious, and inequitable. Inſtead of forming additional regiments, thoſe already ſubſiſting ought to have been recruited to their full complement, according to the manner that had been practiſed in the laſt and former wars: this would have proved an effectual ſupply, and rendered an eſſential and much wanted ſervice to the army. Freſh levies incorporated with veteran ſoldiers, ſoon acquired that military ſpirit, and thoſe habits of regularity and diſcipline, which they had continually before their eyes; but a new raiſed body of men, totally unacquainted with the uſe of arms, were long in forming themſelves to quickneſs and preciſion in the various duties of their profeſſion, for want of that aſſiſtance and incitement which are derived from conſtant example.

The generoſity of thoſe who filled up the ſubſcriptions, and raiſed the new regiments, had been much extolled. Had the latter applied their money to the purpoſe of furniſhing recruits for the old regiments, nobody could have doubted their patriotiſm: ſuch a plan would have proved of evident utility, as every five thouſand pounds thus employed, would, at five pounds bounty a man, have ſupplied the army with a thouſand good recruits. But the method which had been adopted, was unſatisfactory, and afforded ſuſpicions that intereſt alone had prompted thoſe who were concerned in it. Individuals in poſſeſſion of contracts to ſupply the army with neceſſaries, could not certainly benefit themſelves more readily, than by contributing

tributing to additional levies: what they beſtowed with one hand, was received with ample profits in the other. In the ſame manner each of theſe new regiments produced, by the ſale of commiſſions, three or four times the ſum expended in raiſing it.

This method of conducting the buſineſs was attended with another glaring impropriety. The rule of promotion, according to ſeniority, had been ſet aſide in a manner that could not be juſtified:—Officers who had ſpent their lives in the ſervice, ſaw their juniors lifted over them without the leaſt pretence for ſuch a preference: equity ſhould have dictated, that in the raiſing of new regiments, the Lieutenant Colonels ought to have been employed according to their ſtanding. By acting otherwiſe, injuſtice had been done to the army, and very high diſcontents muſt be expected to follow.

A variety of other arguments was produced by oppoſition, to invalidate and expoſe the impropriety, the inequitableneſs, and the danger of this meaſure. They made a conſiderable impreſſion, and induced many members, who voted uſually for miniſtry, to ſide againſt them on this occaſion. On a motion that a ſum of money ſhould be granted for cloathing the new forces, it was carried on a diviſion, by a majority of two hundred and twenty-three, to one hundred and thirty; ſo much was the minority encreaſed through the diſapprobation of the buſineſs in agitation.

In the Houſe of Lords, the oppoſition to this meaſure was no leſs violent than in the Houſe of Commons. The Earl of Abingdon diſtinguiſhed himſelf remarkably on this ſide of the queſtion. He contended with great ſpirit and vigour againſt its lawfulneſs and propriety, and moved that the Judges ſhould be ſummoned to give their opinion on this matter.

To

To this motion it was objected, that the attendance of the Judges could only be required on points of law, whereas this was a conſtitutional queſtion: that a motion by a ſingle Peer was not of ſufficient weight for ſuch a requiſition, which ought to be made by an order of the whole Houſe.

The Lords in oppoſition replied, that while Parliament ſat, the Judges were always ſuppoſed to attend the Upper Houſe, writs being iſſued at every new Parliament to that intent. From the importance of their other avocations, their preſence was excuſed, and only expected on a ſpecial ſummons; but when a motion was made for their attendance, it was cuſtomary to grant it.

This motion being overruled by the majority, Lord Abingdon proceeded to move ſome reſolutions againſt the meaſure in debate, which were ſeconded with great warmth and earneſtneſs by the other Lords in oppoſition.

It was aſſerted, that to raiſe troops during the ſitting of Parliament, without its conſent, was a direct violation of its fundamental rights: the very eſſence of its power and privileges conſiſted in judging of the neceſſities of the kingdom, and in providing, according to its diſcretion, for every public emergency that aroſe: to take any meaſures of this nature during a parliamentary ſeſſion, without its advice and participation, was in fact to deprive it of its authority, and therefore a manifeſt breach of the conſtitution. The ſubſcriptions opened at London, and Briſtol, were audacious infringements of the excluſive powers conſtitutionally enjoyed by Parliament in all matters that related to the granting of money to the crown; and tended in their conſequences to eſtabliſh a precedent utterly ſubverſive of the conſtitution.

Thoſe who contended for the meaſure, alledged, that it was by no means repugnant either to the ſpirit

rit or letter of the Bill of Rights, which was juſtly conſidered as the foundation of the Britiſh government ever ſince the revolution. That Bill declared in expreſs terms, that the Crown ſhould not keep an army on foot in time of peace: was not this an implication that it might lawfully do it in time of war? Was not the preſent war a moſt dangerous one in every point of view? Was not the kingdom menaced on every ſide? Was it not therefore an indiſpenſible duty in the Crown to provide for the ſecurity of the nation in the moſt effectual, and conſequently, in the moſt expeditious manner? Could any method be more effectual and expeditious than that in which both the king and his ſubjects concurred with ſo much readineſs and confidence? If unanimity was due to any meaſure, it ought certainly to accompany one that ſhewed ſo much patriotiſm and zeal in the people. A diſpoſition of this kind could not meet with too much encouragement: it was by popular exertions of this nature, that ſtates had often been extricated from difficulties, which would otherwiſe have totally overwhelmed them. To caſt any aſperſion on the meaſure, would be to throw a damp on the ſpirit of the people, which might be attended with very detrimental conſequences in future. Exertions of this kind might poſſibly come to be wanted much more than at preſent; but when the obſtructions that were thrown in the way of this meaſure were remembered, they would greatly cool the ardour of the public, and retard its readineſs to adopt them.

It was further inſiſted, that it was the undoubted prerogative of the Crown to levy an army, as it was the privilege of Parliament to conſider of the propriety of the meaſure, and to grant or refuſe money for its ſupport. A denial on their part implied a diſapprobation, and the troops were of courſe diſbanded. It was experimentally inconſiſtent with

good policy, to take the advice of Parliament previous to ſuch a meaſure. In raiſing armies at home, or in giving ſubſidies abroad, it was not cuſtomary to conſult that aſſembly. To ſecure its authority, it was ſufficient that it could render both meaſures void by the refuſal of ſupplies to make them good.

It was lawful for any ſubject to give the King either land or money: it had been frequently done without animadverſion. To compare the preſent ſubſcriptions to the benevolences of old, was a groſs miſrepreſentation:—The money raiſed in former ages, under that pretence, was actually extorted; whoever refuſed the payment he had been aſſeſſed, was liable to impriſonment. Was it equitable to draw compariſons between ſuch tyrannical proceedings, and thoſe adopted in the preſent exigency? What could be more laudable, and therefore more lawful, than the ſubſcriptions and the levies of men now ſo cheerfully, and ſo liberally carrying on by thoſe who wiſhed well to government? It was a donation to the ſtate, of which the Crown was, in truth, no more than a truſtee: it was unfeignedly employed for the ſervice of the public, and no ſuſpicion was harboured of its being diverted to any other uſe. Why then oppoſe it with ſuch warmth? All parties concurred in acknowledging the neceſſity of union, and a vigorous co-operation; what ſtronger proof could be given of a general willingneſs to ſecond the views approved of by the nation in the perſons of its repreſentatives, than this zealous and voluntary aſſiſtance of individuals, uncompelled, and directed by no other proſpect than that of promoting the welfare of the ſtate?

The meaſure was not new; it had occaſionally been put in practice without any evil conſequence. What injury could poſſibly reſult from it? The additional

ditional bounty-money arising from the subscriptions, was an inducement to enlist, that could not fail to procure recruits sooner than without such an encouragement. Where the service of the community was so indisputably the ultimate object proposed, instead of enquiring whether some latent mischief might not lurk at the bottom of this measure, people ought to rejoice to find such a spirit of unanimity in the common defence, so widely diffused; instead of apprehending danger from it, the nation ought to congratulate itself that such a liberality of sentiments animated so many of its members.

It was a melancholy reflection, that the rage of party should so far mislead men, as to make them condemn at home, what, when done abroad, would command their highest applause: voluntary contributions of subjects, had, at all times, and in all governments, been considered as highly meritorious. History abounded with proofs of the salutary effects they had produced; but no instance could be mentioned of any nations having had cause to repent of its generosity in cases of exigency like the present.

After a long and interesting debate, wherein much eloquence and knowledge was displayed on each side of the question, the question being put on the resolutions moved by the Earl of Abingdon, they were rejected by a majority of ninety to thirty.

CHAP. XXXII.

Parliamentary Debates relating to America.

1778.

THE deciſion of the important queſtion concerning the ſubſcriptions and new levies, was next followed by the enquiry into the ſtate of the nation, moved for, and carried by Mr. Fox previous to the receſs.

On the ſecond day of February, as it had been appointed, he opened the buſineſs in a long and intereſting diſcourſe, wherein he adverted to every part of the ſubject with great order, preciſion, and perſpicuity.

He reviewed the miniſterial conduct of American affairs, from the date of thoſe meaſures that gave birth to hoſtilities, to the period when theſe commenced; recapitulating the events they had produced. He requeſted of the Houſe, ſeriouſly and impartially to attend to the great ſubject under their deliberation, the actual ſtate of Great Britain, and in what manner ſhe might be brought out of the difficulties in which ſhe was ſo deeply and ſo dangerouſly involved.

He obſerved, that it was not poſſible for any country to decline from ſuch a ſummit of proſperity and grandeur, with ſo much rapidity, as had been the fate of Great Britain, without ſome radical error in the adminiſtration of its affairs. That error conſiſted in a falſe perception of the ſituation and circumſtances of the Colonies, and an ignorance of the diſpoſition and character of the Coloniſts. It had not been conſidered how ſtrongly they were linked together by one common intereſt, and how jealouſly

they would look on any attempt to introduce alterations among them in matters of government.

It was owing to this fatal inadvertence, that the British miniſtry raſhly engaged in a quarrel with one of the Colonies, which in the iſſue involved them gradually in a conteſt with all. They did not foreſee the magnitude of that oppoſition with which they would have to contend: the conſequence was, that unable to face it with a force adequate to its ſuppreſſion, it gathered a ſtrength and vigour which emboldened the Colonies to go ſuch lengths as they had done.

The Britiſh miniſtry ſeemed in this inſtance to be totally unaware, that to aim at an increaſe of power without the means of enforcing it, can only ſerve to augment the ſtrength of oppoſition, and to diminiſh that authority which was not before diſputed.

Thus were the Colonies driven, by the imprudent haughtineſs of Britain, into an hoſtile union againſt her. The ſevere acts of the year ſeventy-four had never paſſed but for the miniſterial ignorance of the true ſtate of the Colonies and their inhabitants; otherwiſe they would unqueſtionably have adopted lenity, inſtead of that fruitleſs ſyſtem of compulſion, which only expoſed them to contempt, when it was found they were unable to carry their threats into execution.

The Quebec act completed the enmity of which the foundation had been laid by the preceding. It ſilenced all the well-wiſhers to Britain among the Americans. They now clearly ſaw, what were the utlimate intentions of the Britiſh miniſtry; and they united accordingly in the firmeſt determination to oppoſe them at all events.

In the midſt of this univerſal diſſatisfaction, an opening to reconciliation was made by a reſpectful application from the Colony of New York; but

that alſo was rejected with the ſame arrogance which had dictated all the former meaſures.

After the ſword had been drawn; after the Britiſh and American blood had been ſhed at Lexington, and at Bunker's Hill, the Colonies were ſtill unwilling to proceed to thoſe extremities, to which it was ſo long foretold they would have recourſe, in caſe Britain refuſed the ſatisfaction they required. They made the moſt ſubmiſſive overtures for reconciliation; they preſented a petition containing the moſt reaſonable demands; but the world too well knew in what manner it was rejected, and what were the conſequences of the refuſal.

Experience had now ſhewn, that notwithſtanding the great force employed by ſea and land againſt the Colonies, while victories were gained, no impreſſion was made: they ſtill maintained their ground againſt the principal army, and had totally defeated and captured another. Every day brought freſh proof, that the obſtacles in the way of our military operations in America, were inſurmountable; coercion was therefore impracticable, and an accommodation indiſpenſible.

While our affairs were in ſo unproſperous a ſituation in America, they wore a no leſs alarming aſpect at home. The ſtanding military eſtabliſhment was diminiſhed by the continual drafts of men for America, while the nation was in hourly expectation of a rupture with the Houſe of Bourbon.

In conſequence of this expoſition of unqueſtionable facts, he moved, That no hopes remaining of a ſubjugation of the Colonies, and the danger to which the realm was expoſed at home, being great and imminent, none of the troops remaining for the defence of Britain and its European dependencies, ſhould be ſent to America.

The ſpeech, of which the above is the ſubſtance, continued two full hours, and was heard with uncommon

common ſilence and attention. But, contrary to the expectation of the oppoſition, neither the ſpeech nor the motion produced any reply from the miniſterial party; the queſtion was called for as ſoon as he had finiſhed, and the motion rejected by a ſilent majority of two hundred and fifty-nine, againſt a minority that amounted, upon this occaſion, to no leſs than one hundred and ſixty-five.

On the ſixth of February, a motion was made by Mr. Burke, for copies of ſuch papers as had paſſed between the miniſtry and the Generals in America; and ſuch alſo as related to the employment of the Indians. He accompanied his motion with a ſpeech of above three hours length.

The intent of this ſpeech was to expoſe the inhumanity, ill policy, and inutility of employing the Indians in the war that was waging againſt the Colonies. He depicted, in ſtrong colours, the native barbarity of their diſpoſition, and the horrible cruelties they exerciſed upon the perſons of their captives. He aſſerted, that as allies, their aſſiſtance could be of no weight from the ſmallneſs of their numbers. The only uſe they were fit for, was murder and devaſtation. He exculpated Congreſs from the imputation of having firſt endeavoured to engage the Indians on their ſide: they had, on the contrary, ſtipulated with them for a neutrality.—The expence of maintaining theſe ſavages, was exceſſive; one of them coſt more than five regular ſoldiers. They had not only diſhonoured, but ruined the cauſe of Britain; their barbarities had compelled all the inhabitants of the country in the neighbourhood of the late northern army, to take up arms for the immediate preſervation of their lives and families. It was through the acceſſion of theſe exaſperated multitudes, that General Gates was enabled to encloſe that army on every ſide, and to reduce it to ſuch extremities, as to force it to ſurrender.

render. He adverted with great ſeverity to the endeavours that had been made in two of the ſouthern Colonies to excite an inſurrection of the negroes againſt the white people. Such an hatred to Britain had been produced by that meaſure in the Province of Virginia, that it had taken a determination to reſiſt ſingly, were all the other Colonies to ſubmit. No meaſure adopted by miniſtry had given a deeper wound to the intereſt of Britain in America than this employment of the Indian ſavages. It had no leſs diſparaged the character of the nation among foreigners, whoſe ſurprize at our conduct in this inſtance, muſt have been the greater, as it had hitherto been remarkable for its humanity. He concluded by aſſerting, that it was incumbent on Parliament to make ſtrict inquiry into this matter, and ſolemnly to reprobate and diſavow ſo inhuman a meaſure, ſo derogatory to the reputation of a civilized people, and at the ſame time ſo repugnant to policy, tending in its nature to render enmity perpetual, and to preclude all hopes of a reconciliation.

Such was the general intent of this celebrated ſpeech. It made a very powerful impreſſion, and it was received with greater applauſe than any he had ever ſpoken. One member, in particular, wiſhed it to be printed, and affixed to the doors of churches, together with the proclamation for a general faſt. Another congratulated miniſtry on the excluſion of ſtrangers upon this day, as the indignation of the public might thereby have been rouſed to ſuch a pitch, as to menace their perſonal ſafety.

The reply of miniſtry to theſe heavy charges was, that ſuch a neutrality as had been repreſented, was impracticable in fact. That from the temper and maxims of the Indians, no alternative was left between their alliance and their enmity. No war ever had

had been, or could be carried on in America, without the intervention of the Indians. Their diſpoſitions always led them to mix in the quarrels of the Europeans ſettled in their country. Had they been employed by neither party, they would have acted an hoſtile part to both, whenever opportunities were afforded. It was therefore wiſer to ſecure their friendſhip, than to remain expoſed to the danger that muſt have ariſen from neglecting them.

It was aſſerted, that the animadverſion concerning the encouragement of negroes to revolt againſt their maſters, had no juſt foundation: they had been promiſed their liberty on repairing to the royal ſtandard, but had by no means been incited to act any otherwiſe than as ſoldiers in the field: maſſacres and aſſaſſinations were the baſe and groundleſs ſuggeſtions of thoſe who laboured to deſcribe every act of the miniſtry, and their adherents, in the moſt odious colours.

After a moſt violent debate, Mr. Burke's motion was rejected, by a majority of two hundred and twenty-three, to one hundred and thirty-ſeven.

Notwithſtanding the rejection of theſe, and other motions, the oppoſition continued the inquiry with great perſeverance and aſſiduity. On the eleventh of February, Mr. Fox reſumed the buſineſs in the Houſe of Commons; and from different calculations, ſtated the number of men loſt to the army, in killed, diſabled, deſerted, and from various other cauſes, ſince the commencement of hoſtilities, at about twenty thouſand; and the expences incurred, at twenty-five millions.

On this ground he appealed to the ſenſe of the nation, whether it was prudent, after ſuch a fruitleſs profuſion of blood and treaſure, to continue a war pregnant with loſſes and diſappointments of every denomination. If we had not ſucceeded againſt the enemy while undiſciplined, and new to military

military buſineſs, how could we promiſe ourſelves better ſucceſs, now that he had profited by the experience of three campaigns.

Miniſtry condemned with great warmth, the attempt to lay before the public in ſo explicit a manner, the circumſtances of the American war. The critical ſituation of this country, rendered any diſcloſure of our affairs highly impolitic, eſpecially as it was ſo ſtrongly inſinuated that we were at the eve of ſtill greater dangers.

This was anſwered by obſerving, that the very intent of the inquiry upon which the houſe was ſitting, demanded an elucidation of theſe circumſtances. The apprehenſions expreſſed by miniſtry of the detriment that might reſult from expoſing the ſituation of this country in point of ſtrength, were no valid argument againſt a proper examination:—Precedent was againſt them. In the midſt of war it had been uſual to inquire into the actual ſtate of the national forces, by land or ſea; into the conduct of Admirals and Generals: into the cauſes of defeats and loſſes.

Among other points of diſcuſſion it was noticed, that miniſtry intended to make a change of Generals in America, and that great hopes were formed from this projected alteration. But it was aſſerted, that whoever was entruſted with the conduct of the war, would not prove more ſucceſsful than the preſent commanders. The ſame difficulties would produce the ſame vexations and diſappointments. If they acted with reſolution and ſpirit, they would be taxed with temerity and precipitation; if circumſtances compelled them to uſe care and circumſpection, they would then be charged with timidity,—with tardineſs,—with a deſign to protract the war for the ſake of emolument. The obſtinacy of miniſters would never aſcribe miſcarriages to their true cauſe, which was the impoſſibility of ſucceeding, from the many

inſuper-

inſuperable obſtacles that ſtood in the way of all the ſkilfulneſs and bravery that could be exerted. Neither courage nor abilities had been wanting; all had been done that expert commanders could have planned, and valiant ſoldiers executed; but victories and advantages were neceſſarily purchaſed at ſo dear a price in that country, that no enterprize, however judiciouſly conducted, was free from uncomm n and peculiar dangers and obſtructions.—The miſcarriages of the war were owing to the nature of it, and were abſolutely unavoidable: difficulties were connected with each other by an indiſſoluble chain, and the ſurmounting of one immediately produced another. The war had now laſted ſufficiently to convince us, that the conqueſt of America was an attempt which the power of Britain, great as it was, would not be able to compaſs. Prudence, therefore, dictated as ſpeedy a retreat from this deſtructive field as was conſiſtent with honour. This, happily for the nation, had not been loſt; but its wiſdom would be juſtly controverted, were it, after ſuch reiterated experience of their inutility, to perſiſt in thoſe ruinous efforts that had coſt it ſuch numbers of brave men, and ſuch immenſe ſums of money.

The iſſue of this long and animated debate was, that the various reſolutions moved by Mr. Fox were negatived; and that notwithſtanding the increaſe of the minority, it became evident that miniſtry was yet poſſeſſed of an aſcendancy in the Houſe which oppoſition would not be able to encounter. It remained, however, immoveably determined to proceed, and to diſpute every inch of ground on which a conteſt could be ſupported.

In the Houſe of Lords, the debates were not leſs aſſiduous on this important ſubject. The Duke of Richmond diſtinguiſhed himſelf particularly on the ſide of oppoſition, and conducted it with a mixture of

of coolneſs and animation, that commanded much notice and applauſe.

After a laborious diſquiſition on the moſt intereſting circumſtances relating to the preſent ſtate of the kingdom, he ſummed up his arguments, by laying before the Houſe the vaſt armaments that were carrying on with ſuch unuſual earneſtneſs and diligence in all the ports of France and Spain; the abſence of a conſiderable part of our land and ſea-forces on the other ſide of the ocean; the inadequateneſs of the number of troops remaining in the kingdom, and its dependencies, for their neceſſary defence; and the probability of their being ſhortly attacked.

Feb 2, 1778.

This repreſentation was in conſequence followed by a motion ſimilar to that of Mr. Fox in the other Houſe:—That a large part of the military eſtabliſhment for the guard of the realm, having already been drafted for foreign ſervice, what now remained, ſhould be left entire for home defence; as ſending more abroad, would reduce the realm to ſo weak a condition, as to expoſe it to inſult and invaſion.

Adminiſtration oppoſed this motion for the ſame reaſon that had been brought againſt it in the Houſe of Commons,—the impolicy of laying our circumſtances open to foreign powers. It was alſo cenſured as interfering with the Royal prerogative of directing the employment of the military force of the realm. Nor was the army to be conſidered as the principal ſtrength of this nation; it conſiſted much more in its navy: while that was in a flouriſhing condition, no danger need be apprehended from abroad; and happily for this country, never had its fleets been abler to command reſpect and terror than at preſent. Were the motion to paſs, it would be an abſolute relinquiſhment of our claims in America, as it would be a confeſſion of our incapacity to enforce them.

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The reply of oppoſition was, that the ſituation of this country with reſpect to its internal defence, was perfectly known abroad: matters of this kind could be made a ſecret of in no country. It was abſurd therefore in adminiſtration to oppoſe any motion on that ground. The Houſe of Bourbon was well acquainted with the weakneſs of our preſent circumſtances, in every point, notwithſtanding the futile endeavours of miniſtry to conceal them. It was in conſequence of that knowledge, the ſtile of the French Court was now become ſo lofty. Whatever miniſters might pretend to the contrary, they knew what was preparing for them on the neighbouring ſhore, and that France was that inſtant meditating in what manner to begin the rupture with Britain. The ſhadow of peace ſtill ſubſiſting between them, would vaniſh in a few weeks, and leave them deſtitute of that feeble, as well as falſe pretence, that we had nothing to apprehend from abroad, which they had long continued to urge with ſo ſcandalous an obſtinacy.

Great diſſatisfaction was expreſſed on this occaſion at the behaviour of miniſtry. It was repreſented as aiming to deceive the public, and to conceal from it what it had the cleareſt right to know,—its real circumſtances, and how far its ſecurity had been provided for, in a criſis that might, without exaggeration, be ſaid to teem with dangers of greater magnitude than had ever menaced this country.

It was an inſult to the nation, to expect that an adminiſtration which had brought it to the very brink of perdition, ſhould meet with the ſame confidence as if their meaſures had been crowned with ſucceſs. The misfortunes and diſappointments which had befallen this nation of late, were notoriouſly the reſult of their imprudence. It was natural, therefoer, that miniſters ſhould be called to account for every ſtep they had taken, and ſtill more, for thoſe

thoſe they intended to take in the preſent alarming poſture of public affairs.

On putting the queſtion, the Duke of Richmond's motion was rejected, upon a diviſion, by a majority of ninety-three, to thirty-one.

This rejection did not, however, abate his activity. In a ſubſequent Committee of the Houſe upon this ſubject, he ſtated the following facts :— That ſince the commencement of hoſtilities, five hundred and fifty-nine merchant ſhips had fallen into the hands of the Americans, the value of which had been proved to amount to no leſs than two millions ſix hundred thouſand pounds: that of two hundred ſhips employed every year in the trade to Africa, before the preſent troubles, the average worth of each being about nine thouſand pounds, only forty remained in that branch, which was therefore diminiſhed one million four hundred and forty thouſand pounds annually. The price of inſurance to the Weſt Indies, and to North America, was increaſed from two to five per cent. with convoy, but without it, to fifteen. Seamen's wages were raiſed from thirty ſhillings, to three pounds a month; the price of pot-aſh was advanced from eight ſhillings, to three pounds ten ſhillings the hundred weight; that of ſpermaceti oil, from thirty-five pounds the ton, to ſeventy; tar, from eight ſhillings the barrel, to thirty: the price of ſugars, and other Weſt India commodities, and of naval ſtores from North America, was greatly augmented.—Theſe loſſes and diſtreſſes were occaſioned through the captures made by the American ſhips of war and privateers. From authentic accounts, the number of theſe amounted to one hundred and ſeventy-three, carrying two thouſand five hundred and fifty-ſix guns, and about fourteen thouſand ſeamen.

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In anſwer to theſe poſitions, it was alledged on the miniſterial ſide, that if the commerce of Great Britain had ſuffered by the war, that of the Colonies had ſuffered ſtill more. This country had, upon the whole, the advantage in this reſpect.—The number of American prizes amounted at this day to upwards of nine hundred; worth, upon a medium, two thouſand pounds each, and making altogether, eighteen hundred thouſand pounds; adding to theſe the value of the fiſheries, from which the Americans were now precluded, the damage done to the Colonies was not leſs than two millions two hundred houſand pounds.

The ſtatement of their loſſes made by the merchants, as adduced by the Duke of Richmond, was repreſented as much beyond reality. It was cenſured as erroneous in the liſt of ſhips taken by the enemy, and no leſs in the eſtimate of their value. If ſome branches of trade were diminiſhed, the deficiency had been replaced by the increaſe of others. It was undeniable and well aſcertained, that a variety of new channels of trade had been lately opened, highly to the benefit of this country. That great detriment was occaſioned to the Americans by the numerous captures of their veſſels, was a fact uncontroverted, and proved by the diſtreſſes to which the whole Continent was reduced, and complaining of, from one extremity to the other.

After a well ſupported conteſt, ſeveral reſolutions moved by the Duke of Richmond, in conſequence of the ſtatements and repreſentations he had laid before the Houſe, were negatived, by putting the previous queſtion upon them.

During theſe Parliamentary debates, great heats and diſcontents were created throughout the nation by the ſubſcriptions and levies of troops without conſulting Parliament. No part of England ſignaliſed its warmth againſt this meaſure with more freedom

freedom and explicitneſs than the county of Norfolk. It preſented a petition, or rather a remonſtrance to Parliament, ſubſcribed by five thouſand four hundred individuals: the contents of it were peculiarly pointed and ſtriking, and ſhowed a people that were determined to ſpeak their minds without reſpect of perſons.

An empire, they ſaid, was loſt; a great continent in arms, was either to be conquered or abandoned. The nation had been deceived and deluded with regard to the nature, the cauſe, and the importance of the American troubles, as well as concerning the means of quieting them. Acts of Parliament had been made only to be repealed; armies ſent out to enforce them, only to be returned to this country under capitulations. The glory of the nation ought no longer to be expoſed to diſgrace, nor Engliſhmen to hardſhips and perils abroad, without better hopes that they ſhould not, by the ſame errors, be liable to the ſame calamities and diſgraces, that had befallen ſo many of thoſe who had already been ſent forth. Without wiſe councils at home, neither empire nor reputation could be preſerved abroad.

Such was the general ſcope of this celebrated petition. It was preſented to the Houſe on the ſeventeenth of February, the day fixed upon by miniſtry for opening a conciliatory plan with America.

After ſome preparatory obſervations. the plan propoſed by the miniſter, was to enable the Crown to appoint Commiſſioners to treat with the Colonies concerning the means of putting an end to the preſent conteſt between them and Great Britain. The intention was to name five perſons to this commiſſion, and to inveſt them with very ample powers. They were to be authoriſed to treat with Congreſs as a lawful aſſembly, repreſenting and acting for America; with any of the Provincial Aſſemblies, upon

upon the conſtitutions they had aſſumed; and with any individuals, in their preſent civil or military capacities: they were empowered to order a ſuſpenſion of arms; to ſuſpend the operation of all laws; to grant pardons, immunities, and rewards; to reſtore all, or any of the Colonies, to the forms of their conſtitutions previous to the preſent troubles, and to nominate the governors, and all other officers, in thoſe where the Crown had exerciſed that nomination.

Should the Americans claim the title of Independent States, in treating with the Commiſſioners, it was to be allowed them until the treaty had been ratified by the King and Parliament. The Commiſſioners were to negociate, upon a re-union of the empire, for a reaſonable contribution to its common exigencies, on the part of the Colonies; but this demand was not to be inſiſted on, and to be given up, rather than not terminate the quarrel.

The miniſter accompanied this propoſal with a long and accurate diſcourſe upon the ſubject. He concluded by aſſerting, that his conceſſions did not proceed from neceſſity, but were dictated by reaſon and propriety. Great Britain was by no means diſabled from continuing the war; there was no deficiency of troops; many more might ſtill be raiſed; and the navy was in full force: the revenue to ſupport all theſe was very little impaired, and the funds for the ſervice of the year would ſhortly be provided, at a moderate intereſt.

The Houſe was ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at the contents of this ſpeech.—As the ſtile and ſubſtance were ſo different from thoſe that had ſo frequently been made upon this ſubject, it was conjectured that ſome powerful motive had induced miniſtry to adopt ſuch an alteration of meaſures.

This idea was confirmed by the poſitive aſſertion of Mr. Fox, that a treaty had been ſigned at Paris,

tween the Colonies and the French miniſtry, by which it recogniſed their independence.

The propoſals of the miniſter met with no oppoſition: but it was obſerved, at the ſame time, that they came too late to produce any reaſonable hope of their anſwering the end propoſed. The Americans had now ſettled their independency upon ſo ſtrong and ſolid a foundation, that it could not be expected they would be prevailed upon to part with it for any offers that Britain could make. Its negociations would not prove more effectual than its arms, and nothing would now ſhake the reſolution of a people who had ſuffered ſo much, and made ſuch exertions to accompliſh that object. Their ſituation was no longer uncertain and precarious; they ſtood upon firm ground; they were ſupported not only by their own ſtrength, but alſo by that of the powerfulleſt allies they could poſſibly have found. They knew their advantages too well to relinquiſh them. If they had obſtinately perſiſted in oppoſing the whole might of Britain, while unaſſiſted, and while it was imagined by many that they would not be able to make good their reſiſtance, they certainly would not give up the fruits of their perſeverance, now that they could enjoy them with ſecurity.

The Americans were too full of reſentment for the treatment they had met, to harbour thoſe ſentiments of cordiality that were neceſſary to incline them to ſuch a reconciliation as was propoſed.—They would undoubtedly accept of peace upon terms of equality and independence; and might, perhaps, when the remembrance of the injuries they had received was ſubſided, form amicable engagements with this country; but no more could be looked for at preſent, than a ſimple pacification. A return to obedience ought not to enter into our ideas,

ideas, if we ſeriouſly meant to put an end to hoſtilities.

Many ſevere things were ſaid upon this occaſion againſt the miniſtry; but the general opinion was, that having given up the article of taxation, which was in truth the only point deſerving of contention, a peace ought ſpeedily to be concluded at any rate, and without inſiſting on ſuch terms as would unqueſtionably be refuſed, and only occaſion a prolongation of the war.

Great offence was taken at the miniſtry's real or pretended ignorance, whether a treaty was in agitation or exiſtence between France and the Colonies. It was however agreed on all ſides, that nothing could be more probable in the preſent circumſtances. Matters were now brought to that maturity which the Court of France had ſo long in contemplation. America had now obtained a degree of weight by her ſucceſſes in the late campaign, which would enable the Houſe of Bourbon to turn the ſcale with facility againſt Great Britain. Until theſe had taken place, and their preparations were compleated, the French had delayed their open interference; but both theſe views being fulfilled, they were now ready to enter upon the ſcene of action avowedly, and without any further diſſimulation.

Much indignation was expreſſed upon this occaſion, by a great number of members, at the infallible diſgrace which a conciliatory propoſition of ſuch a nature as the preſent, would bring on the councils and character of this nation. Sooner than ſubmit to ſuch an indignity, the reſources of this country ought, they ſaid, to be tried to their utmoſt bearing: with prudence and management they would be found ſufficient to reduce America to the duty it owed to Great Britain. Nothing would degrade us more, than after laviſhing ſo much treaſure, and ſacrificing ſo many thouſands of our

braveſt men, to acknowledge the independence of ſubjects who had ſo inſultingly bid us defiance, and refuſed all terms but thoſe of their own preſcribing. Such a propoſal would only ſerve to render the Americans totally untractable. It would add freſh ſpirit to their councils, and courage to their people; while it would, on the other hand, depreſs the reſolution of our armies, and relax the vigour with which they had hitherto exerted themſelves for the cauſe and the honour of their country. It would no leſs abate the reliance upon us, of the well-affected among the Americans, and ſlacken their zeal in our ſervice. But what was of ſtill worſe conſequence, this propoſal would make no impreſſion on the Americans; they would reject it, and thereby expoſe us to the deriſion of all Europe.

After undergoing various alterations, the Conciliatory Bill was paſſed with the unanimous conſent of all parties, on the ſecond of March. Some of theſe alterations, however, were much diſapproved of by the oppoſition, as bringing the powers veſted in the commiſſioners within too narrow a compaſs. Perſons entruſted with a negociation, upon which ſo much depended, and which was carried on at ſuch a diſtance, ought, ſaid they, to have been fully authoriſed, not only to treat, but to conclude finally upon all matters. Many would ariſe which would require an immediate deciſion. A reference to ſuperior authority at home, would neceſſarily leave many things unſettled. This would be tying up the hands of the commiſſioners, and giving diſguſt to the Americans. Whoever were employed to negociate with them, muſt, from their being on the ſpot, be better able to act from their own judgment and determination of what was adviſable, than by the direction of individuals in Europe.

On the eleventh of March, in a reſumption of the Committee of Inquiry into the ſtate of the nation,

tion, a reſolution was moved by Mr. Fox, that the navy, in its actual condition, was not equal to the defence of theſe kingdoms in the preſent critical poſture of affairs.

It was aſſerted upon this occaſion, that the ſums expended upon the navy during the laſt eight years, exceeded in a double proportion, thoſe that had been expended on it during the whole eight years of the laſt war.

The debates on the reſolution were exceedingly earneſt and animated. Much aſſertion and contradiction was uſed by both parties. As it was a ſubject wherein the nation was deeply intereſted, thoſe who ſpoke on either ſide of the queſtion, neglected nothing to ſupport their different opinions; but, as uſual, in caſes of an intricate nature, where truth lies involved in a miſt of inveſtigation and perplexity, though much eloquence and knowledge were diſplayed, yet a complete elucidation of the ſubject was not attained. As the buſineſs was diſagreeable to miniſtry, it was defeated by putting the previous queſtion.

The ſame warmth accompanied, in the Houſe of Lords, the debates upon this, and the various other ſubjects that had been ſo animatedly diſcuſſed in the Houſe of Commons. The criticalneſs of the times ſeemed to infuſe additional ſpirit into all parties, and to have ſummoned them to the utmoſt exertion of their abilities.

An incident of a particular kind happened about this time in the Houſe of Lords. Some time after the convention at Saratoga, General Gates wrote a letter in a very pathetic ſtile, and of a very intereſting nature, to the Earl of Thanet, a nobleman with whom he had formerly lived upon a footing of great intimacy. The letter related chiefly to the unhappy ſituation of affairs between Great Britain and America.

After lamenting the misfortunes that had befallen his native country, and the danger to which it was expoſed, he ſtated the neceſſity of ſpeedily applying the only remedy remaining, for the cure of the many evils that afflicted or threatened Great Britain. This remedy was an acknowledgment of American Independence. This, he inſiſted, the Colonies would never part with. "A wiſe miniſter," he ſaid, "by reſcinding the reſolutions paſſed to ſupport that ſyſtem which no power on earth can eſtabliſh, will endeavour to preſerve ſo much of the empire in proſperity and honour, as the circumſtances of the times, and the mal-adminiſtration of thoſe who ruled before him, have left to his government."

"The United States of America," he continued, "are willing to be the friends, but never will ſubmit to be the ſlaves of the parent country. They are by conſanguinity, by language, and by the affection which naturally ſprings from theſe, more attached to England than to any other country under the ſun. Therefore ſpurn not the bleſſing which which yet remains; inſtantly withdraw your fleets and armies; cultivate the commerce and friendſhip of America. Thus, and thus only, can England hope to be great and happy. Seek that in a commercial alliance; ſeek it ere it be too late; for there only you muſt expect to find it."

The Earl of Thanet produced this letter in the Houſe of Lords, on the ſixteenth of February, and requeſted permiſſion that it might be read. But this was ſtrongly oppoſed by adminiſtration. They alledged it would be highly improper, and beneath the dignity of the Houſe, to admit of any correſpondence with any general or officer acting for the rebellious Colonies, and that the letter might be of ſuch a tenour, as would render the reading of it exceedingly offenſive.

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It was, however, after ſome controverſy, read to the Houſe; and the Duke of Richmond moved that it ſhould lie on the table. This motion excited a warm debate. It was argued by miniſtry, that coming from a rebel general, actually in arms againſt the ſtate, it deſerved no admiſſion. It was, beſides, a private letter, containing only the opinions of an individual. It had not the public ſanction of Congreſs, and could not therefore, in any reſpect, become a ground for deliberation. Nor were its contents of a nature to merit attention: they were ſuch as had been reiteratedly condemned by the Houſe, as inimical to the honour and intereſt of the nation. The letter aſſerted that the Americans would never recede from their declaration of Independency, and adviſed a withdrawing of the Britiſh fleets and armies: theſe were ſubjects on which that Houſe, and the nation had already decided, and ſhould not depart from, in compliance with the admonition of an enemy.

It was alledged, on the other hand, that the character of General Gates was above any ſlight or diſreſpect that might be thrown upon it on account of his acting in the ſervice of the Colonies. He was greatly eſteemed in America; and the ſignal advantages he had lately obtained, had acquired him great importance and weight with Congreſs. Such a man's opinions and counſel were not to be undervalued. He was an Engliſhman, and felt for his country, though in arms againſt it for a people who had adopted him, and honoured him with their confidence. The correſpondence of ſuch perſons, and the information reſulting from it, conveyed with much more certainty the ſentiments and diſpoſitions of the people on the American continent, than the partial and intereſted intelligence ariſing from thoſe who had, unfortunately for this country, been ſo much conſulted and relied upon by miniſtry. As it

was now the declared intention of government to open a treaty with America, every kind of information relating to it ought to be received, eſpecially when it came through ſo reſpectable and authentic a channel. To reject it, would be equally imprudent and inſulting; they ought to be fully acquainted with the minds of the people, with whom they were about to negociate on ſuch weighty matters; and it ill became them to affect ſcorn and diſdain towards one who expreſſed concern and affection for Britain, and who, in the midſt of victory and triumph over its armies, ſtill remembered with gratitude and compunction the country to which he owed his birth.

Notwithſtanding the many reaſons that were offered in ſupport of this motion, it was rejected, to the great concern of ſeveral, who flattered themſelves that this letter might have afforded an opening to a favourable accommodation.

This rejection was followed by a reſumption of the Committee of Inquiry into the ſtate of the nation. Several motions were propoſed by the Duke of Richmond, tending to ſtate the number of troops, together with their operations during the ſeveral campaigns in America.

But he was again oppoſed by adminiſtration, upon the ground of the injudiciouſneſs and indiſcretion we ſhould be guilty of in expoſing our national deficiency and weakneſs to the inſpection of the enemy.

This reply greatly exaſperated the Lords in oppoſition. They complained of the perpetual repetition of this argument againſt all the motions made on their part, as if it carried any validity; whereas miniſtry muſt be conſcious it had none. The enemy knew the embarraſſed ſtate of our circumſtances as well as ourſelves; and the mere refuſal of miniſters to authenticate tranſactions that were undeniable, only ſhewed a backwardneſs to acknowledge truths that

were

were not favourable to them. Such behaviour amounted to a denial to eſtabliſh thoſe matters of fact, without which the Houſe could form no reſolutions: this was defeating the very intent of the inquiry they were now making into the circumſtances of the public. If miniſtry was reſolved to proceed in this manner, it were better at once to diſſolve the committee, and put an end to an inquiry, from which they ſeemed determined that no utility ſhould ariſe.

The anſwer to theſe complaints was, that it would be full time after the enquiry was completed, to form reſolutions on the matter before them. It would then be entire and connected, and enable them to conclude with more knowledge of the ſubject, and ſafety in their judgment, than by deciding upon detached pieces of information.

In conſequence of this allegation, the Duke of Richmond's motions, on the previous queſtion being put, were negatived without a diviſion, by the uſual majority, to the great indignation of the minority, and of their adherents, who repreſented this method of proceeding, as a plain indication, that miniſtry was pre-determined to overturn all reaſoning by dint of numbers.

On the nineteenth of February, the Committee of Inquiry being reſumed in the Houſe of Peers, the Duke of Richmond ſtated, in a very preciſe and correct manner, the expences incurred by the war; which now amounted to twenty-three millions, eight hundred and ninety-four thouſand pounds, and upwards. He ſhewed, at the ſame time, that were a pacification to take place, no leſs than nine millions more would be requiſite to bring all matters relating to this war to a final ſettlement. Thus, excluſive of the damages occaſioned by hoſtilities, and other conſequences of the war, it would at all events have

have coſt this nation, in leſs than the ſpace of four years, the enormous ſum of thirty-three millions.

He followed this ſtatement, as he had done the others, with a chain of reſolutions reſulting from it, and which were negatived in the ſame manner as the former, and for the ſame reaſon. They acknowledged themſelves ſo fully convinced of its propriety, that had they conceived what the views of oppoſition had been, in propoſing an inquiry into the ſtate of the nation, they would never have conſented to it.

On the twenty-fifth of February, an examination of the ſtate of the navy was propoſed by the Duke of Bolton; but oppoſed by adminiſtration on the ſame footing of impropriety as the preceding motions.

A violent and acrimonious altercation enſued upon this refuſal. Among other arguments employed by oppoſition, a precedent was quoted from the reign of Queen Anne. During the great and important war, in which the nation was engaged with the Houſe of Bourbon, an account of the ſucceſſion to the Crown of Spain, a very circumſtantial and public inquiry was made by Parliament into the condition of the navy. It was conducted with the utmoſt regularity and ſtrictneſs, notwithſtanding Prince George of Denmark, huſband to the Queen, was at the head of the Admiralty. But the quotation of this precedent was of no effect, and after a long debate, the motion was rejected.

The times, it was ſaid, were very different.—Great Britain was then in the plenitude of triumph; the Duke of Marlborough had, by a continual ſeries of victories and conqueſts, entirely broken the power of France. Lewis the Fourteenth was ſueing for peace; and this country was the umpire of Europe. But our ſituation at preſent was the very reverſe. We had been unſucceſsful in a war abroad, that was

now

now drawing nearer home, and threatened to involve us in the moſt ſerious danger. Was this a ſeaſon to diſcloſe either our military, or naval affairs to the enemy? Whatever they might be, the commoneſt maxims of policy would teach us to conceal them. However they were proſperous, the enemy ſhould, if poſſible, be taught to look upon them as above their reality: if they were unfavourable, the motive was ſtill ſtronger to conceal them.

The Conciliatory Bill was now brought up to the Houſe of Lords, where it paſſed without any oppoſition; but not without ſome ſevere remarks on the humiliation the kingdom ſubmitted to, in acceding to ſuch propoſals. A nation lately triumphant and formidable to all Europe, was now reduced to the neceſſity of ſubſcribing to the demands of its revolted ſubjects, and of making conceſſions that too notoriouſly manifeſted how low it was fallen from that ſtate of greatneſs and glory, which had ſo long rendered it the terror of the greateſt powers in the world. Such were the animadverſions with which this meaſure was received, not only in Parliament, but throughout the nation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Declaration of France in favour of America.

1778.

WHILE theſe diſputes and fermentations were taking place in England, France was preparing to throw off that appearance of peace, which ſtill remained between the two countries. It was now determined in her councils, that an open declaration of her intentions relating to America, was indiſpenſible; as it could not be doubted, that after the connections which had been formed between the French miniſtry and the Congreſs, the miniſtry of Britain would immediately proceed to hoſtilities.

Notwithſtanding the Americans maintained their ground with great courage and vigour, the Court of France was not wholly unapprehenſive, that if left much longer to themſelves, the difficulties that were accumulating upon them, might be productive of impatience, and incline them to ſuch a reconciliation with the parent ſtate, as might fruſtrate thoſe expectations of a total diſmemberment of the Britiſh empire, which were the ſanguine and ultimate views which it had propoſed by eſpouſing the cauſe of the Colonies.

They had now experienced three years of ſuch calamities, as they had never known ſince their firſt foundation. From a life of tranquility and eaſe, they had been ſuddenly launched into the midſt of perplexities of every denomination. Though numbers of them encountered the hardſhips and dangers of this direful quarrel, with unſhaken patience and reſolution, a ſtill greater number began to grow uneaſy at its duration, and earneſtly to wiſh for an accom-

accommodation upon any terms that might ſecure their independence. This was an object which they were univerſally reſolved to maintain at all perils; but they were no leſs diſpoſed to reconciliation, upon conditions in any other reſpect advantageous to Great Britain.

A reconciliation of this nature was greatly dreaded by the Court of France at the preſent juncture. The failure of the expedition againſt the northern Colonies, had awakened her fears upon this ſubject. She apprehended that a conviction of the impracticability of ſuch an attempt as the conqueſt of America, would at laſt induce the Britiſh miniſtry to enter into a negociation with the Congreſs, and terminate the conteſt by an amicable treaty.

Nor did the determination of that miniſtry to perſiſt in coercive meaſures, alter the ideas of the French politicians. The repeated experience of the inefficacy of theſe meaſures, had made ſuch an impreſſion on the Britiſh Parliament, that notwithſtanding the vaſt influence of government, it began to relax of the firmneſs with which it had ſo long adhered to directions, and to exhibit a ſtrong diſpoſition to put an end to a quarrel, which, it was clear, would ſhortly be attended with dangers of the moſt ſerious magnitude.

Impelled by theſe conſiderations, the Court of France had immediately, on receiving intelligence of the convention of Saratoga, taken the reſolution to act an open and deciſive part in this quarrel. It was the univerſal deſire of the whole French nation. The commercial intercourſe now ſubſiſting between them and the Americans, had opened ſuch flattering proſpects to the mercantile claſſes in France, that they unanimouſly concurred in ſeconding the views of the Court, and in expreſſing the moſt fervent wiſhes, that the ſtricteſt union ſhould be formed with the Colonies.

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This intercourſe had not, however, proved hitherto ſo ſucceſsful as it had been at firſt expected. Hurried by an imprudent avidity of gain, numbers of the principal merchants in the ſea ports of France, had ventured to load their veſſels with valuable cargoes for America; but far the greater part of them were taken by the Britiſh cruizers.

Theſe diſappointments, though they fell heavy upon individuals, did not diſcourage the generality of people in buſineſs. They doubted not, by means of the triple alliance that was to be formed between America, France, and Spain, ſhortly to become maſters at ſea, and carry their commerce to ſuch an extent, as would amply compenſate for theſe temporary loſſes. In this expectation, they waited with impatience for the period, when the Houſe of Bourbon would openly join the United States of America, and ſupport them in a reſolute and deciſive manner, by attacking Great Britain at home, and employing that immenſe naval ſtrength againſt her, which had been ſo long preparing.

The American Commiſſioners at Paris, had, by this time, ſucceeded ſo well in the objects of their miſſion, that nothing now remained on the part of France and America, but to give a formal notification to the world, of the deſigns they had long preconcerted, and had in a great meaſure carried into execution.

Towards the cloſe of the year ſeventy-ſeven, preliminaries of a treaty of alliance between France and America, were agreed upon, and a copy of them diſpatched to Congreſs, with advice that the articles were digeſting, and would ſpeedily be ſettled. This was done to anticipate any overtures by the Britiſh miniſtry, and to prevent them, if made, from producing any effect, by convincing the Congreſs that they might depend upon the fulleſt aſſiſtance.

On

On the ſixth of February, ſeventy-eight, the treaty was finally concluded, and ſigned by the contracting parties, to the great ſatisfaction of the whole French nation. It now ſaw the completion of thoſe wiſhes, it had ſo long cheriſhed,—a diſmemberment of the Britiſh empire, and the commercial advantages ariſing from the poſſeſſion of its Colonies, transferred to themſelves.

It was ſtipulated by this celebrated treaty, that ſhould Great Britain, in reſentment of the connection formed between the French and the Americans, proceed to hoſtilities againſt France, or intercept its navigation and commerce with America, they ſhould make it a common cauſe, and aſſiſt each other againſt Great Britain to the utmoſt of their reſpective power.

It was declared that the direct and eſſential end of this treaty of alliance, was to maintain effectually the liberty, ſovereignty, and independence of the United States of America.

Were theſe States to reduce thoſe parts of North America ſtill poſſeſſed by Britain, they were to be confederated with, or dependant upon them.

Should France take poſſeſſion of any of the iſlands in the Weſt Indies belonging to Great Britain, they were to become her property.

Neither France nor the United States, were to conclude any peace or truce with Great Britain without the formal conſent of the other, and they mutually engaged not to lay down their arms until the Independence of thoſe States ſhould have been formally, or virtually ſecured, by the treaty that terminated the war.

The contracting parties agreed to invite and admit thoſe powers that had received injuries from Great Britain, to make a common cauſe with them, and to accede to the preſent alliance againſt it.

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The United States guaranteed to France all her preſent poſſeſſions in the Weſt Indies, together with thoſe ſhe might acquire by treaty at the end of the war; and France guaranteed to the United States, their independence and ſovereignty, abſolute and unlimited, the countries and dominions they poſſeſſed, and thoſe they might acquire in America from Britain, during the preſent war.

Such was the ſubſtance of a treaty that completed one of the moſt aſtoniſhing revolutions ever mentioned in hiſtory,—the ſeparation of a people, who, though divided by the ocean, were deſcended from the ſame original, retained the ſame language, laws, government, politics, religion, cuſtoms, habits, manners, inclination, and character. United by theſe many powerful ties, they had continued during a ſpace verging towards two centuries, on a footing of ſuch cloſe friendſhip and union of intereſt, as raiſed them to the higheſt ſummit of proſperity. This public connection was ſtill further cemented by the numerous benefits and endearments ariſing from conſanguinity, and the remarkable affection and intimacy that ſubſiſted between individuals. In whatever part of the world they met, they reciprocally conſidered each other as Engliſhmen, and behaved with a cordiality and warmth for their mutual welfare, that ſhowed how truly they were united in ſentiments, and how ſincerely attached to each other. What was ſtill more ſurpriſing, this ſeparation was ſucceeded by the ſtricteſt alliance and adherence of one part of them, to the ancient and inveterate enemy of both, whom they had a few years before jointly contributed to humble, and who now was happy to find an occaſion of making himſelf amends for former loſſes, by ſowing the ſeeds of implacability between them, and by rendering the one an inſtrument of his vengeance upon the other.

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It was not difficult to foreſee that this treaty would defeat all attempts to any accommodation between Great Britain and the Americans, that did not correſpond with the utmoſt of their demands; they would now conſider all offers from hence as reſulting from neceſſity, and by no means from good-will, and a ſincere deſire to be reconciled: they would interpret them as the mere effect of fear and weakneſs, and reject them with ſcorn and haughtineſs.

The firſt ſtep taken by the Court of France, immediately after the concluſion of this treaty, was to notify it in due form to the Court of Great Britain. The terms of the notification were highly mortifying, and gave great offence. It ſtated the declaration of independency on the part of America, and their actual poſſeſſion of it, as a ſufficient ground to recogniſe it. It avowed the connections that had already taken place between France and America, and aſſigned them as a juſt foundation for a treaty of friendſhip and commerce. It particularly made a merit that no excluſive advantages had been ſtipulated in favour of the French nation. Notwithſtanding the evident injury done to Great Britain by this treaty, the notification expreſſed a ſincere deſire in the Court of France to cultivate a good underſtanding with it, and expreſſed an expectation that the Britiſh Court would take effectual meaſures to prevent its interruption. This notification concluded, however, with an inſinuation, that the Court of France was determined to protect the commerce of its ſubjects in America, and had, in conſequence, concerted meaſures for that purpoſe with the United States of that continent.

Such a notification was, in fact, a declaration of war. It could not be expected that Great Britain would tamely put up with ſuch an inſult, as declaring her revolted ſubjects a free and independent

nation, and acknowledging a determination to ſupport them in their pretenſions.

The reception of this paper was notified by the miniſter to the Houſe of Commons on the ſixteenth of March.—This notice was accompanied by a meſſage from the King, giving them to underſtand that he ſhould be under the neceſſity of reſenting ſo unprovoked and unjuſt an aggreſſion on the honour of his Crown, and the intereſts of his kingdoms, contrary to ſolemn and reiterated aſſurances, ſubverſive of the law of nations, and highly injurious to the rights of every ſovereign power. Relying with proper confidence on the zeal and ſupport of the nation, he was reſolved to exert all the force and reſources of this country, which, he doubted not, its enemies would find fully ſufficient to maintain its reputation and power againſt all their attacks.

An addreſs was moved by the miniſter, in anſwer to this meſſage, to aſſure the King of the readineſs of his people to ſtand by him in aſſerting the dignity of his Crown, and the honour of the nation, and to ſubmit with chearfulneſs and ſpirit to the expences that would be requiſite for this neceſſary purpoſe.

The propriety of the ſubſtance and intent of the addreſs was not controverted; but it was warmly contended by oppoſition that the preſent miniſtry ought no longer to be entruſted with the conduct of public affairs. Their incapacity and imprudence had involved the realm into ſo many difficulties, that it would be the height of tameneſs and imbecility to acquieſce in the continuance of their power. If they had ſhowed themſelves inadequate to the management of the nation's concerns, in the tranſactions that had preceded, was it reaſonable to imagine that they would acquit themſelves with more ability and ſucceſs in the much more arduous buſineſs that would now devolve upon the hands of thoſe who were to be at

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the helm in the tempeſtuous ſeaſon that was approaching?

An immediate acknowledgment of the independency of America, was deemed by many the only meaſure left to extricate this country out of its difficulties. America had alone reſiſted all its efforts to ſubdue it; was it conſiſtent with reaſon, to think that it would not reſiſt them ſtill more effectually, when ſupported by the whole power of the Houſe of Bourbon?

By a timely acknowledgment of this independency, we might ſtill do that with a good grace which we ſhould be under the neceſſity of doing at laſt through compulſion. Many advantages would reſult from inſtantly adopting this meaſure. A dangerous, unequal war would be avoided, in which the moſt that could he hoped, was the preſervation of what we ſtill poſſeſſed. But what was of incomparably more importance, the cloſe correſpondence that muſt enſue between the French and the Americans, in caſe of a war, would be obviated. This correſpondence would neceſſarily produce a variety of connections between individuals. The French, from their habitual dexterity in ſuch matters, would gradually infuſe their ſentiments, and diffuſe their manners and language among the Coloniſts, to a degree that would, in a great meaſure, obliterate the remembrance of the country from which they originated, and transform them into a people as oppoſite to us in character, as they were now become in intereſts and politics. A prolongation of the war would manifeſtly be attended with theſe conſequences; and would, beſides, lay them under ſuch a load of debt and obligation to France, as they would not be able to ſhake off, and which muſt neceſſarily ſubject them to the heavieſt and moſt ſlaviſh influence of that kingdom while it laſted.

By acknowledging their independence, before they had been compelled to enter into exclusive agreements with France, their trade would remain free and open with all the world. This, of course, would lessen their correspondence with France, and leave them at liberty to form such connections as corresponded most with their interests. Long experience had taught them that Britain was the country where these would be best consulted. By renewing the communication upon business, other channels of intercourse would be opened. A mutual exchange of benefits and good offices, would, by degrees, revive the memory of former friendship. The conviction that Britain had given up all her projects of domination and superiority over the Colonies, would, by removing public mistrust, facilitate the renovation of private intimacy. Thus, in no considerable lapse of time, Britain and America would be thoroughly and sincerely reconciled; and we should reap the fruits of this reconciliation by recovering the largest share in their trade, and by securing their good will and readiness to unite with us as faithful and cordial allies.

Such a situation was certainly more worthy of our option than that of subjection founded upon conquest, on a supposition that such a scheme were practicable. But we had been fully taught, by dear bought experience, that it would not succeed; the sooner, therefore, we relinquished it, the more willing we should find the Americans to give us credit, for leaving them in the peaceable unmolested possession of what they demanded.

Such were the allegations and sentiments of the opposition in Parliament, and of multitudes, perhaps the majority of the nation, at this time. But the ministerial party maintained a contrary opinion. Nothing, said they, could be more spiritless and disgraceful than to bend in this abject and submis-

sive

ſive manner, beneath the authority of France. It was incumbent on Great Britain, at all events, to reſent the arrogance and injuſtice of that Court. Our reſources, even in our preſent difficulties, were ſuperior to thoſe of that country; and the whole world was in expectation that we ſhould not remain paſſive after ſuch treatment.

But were we diſpoſed to grant, without further hefitation, all the requiſitions of the Americans, how could we, in honour and equity, relinquiſh the protection of the well-affected to this country among them, who were, by very intelligent people, affirmed to be the larger number? Were it not more eligible, on the very ſtrength of ſuch an affirmation, to make trial of its veracity, and to put arms into the hands of all thoſe who profeſſed themſelves our friends? Whatever might be the riſk, we could not abandon them, without expoſing our r putation, and loſing that character of fidelity to our engagements, for which we had hitherto been ſo juſtly reſpected.

After a debate that laſted till near three in the morning, the addreſs, without the clauſe propoſed for the removal of miniſtry, was carried on a diviſion, by a majority of two hundred and ſixty-three, to one hundred and thirteen.

In the Houſe of Lords, the debates were ſtill more violent, and accompanied with an acrimony of language, and a freedom of thought, that ſeemed to ſcorn all reſtraint.

The Duke of Mancheſter led the way, and inſiſted in the moſt reſolute and deciſive terms, on the diſmiſſion of the preſent miniſtry, as a condition of approving of any addreſs that recommended a proſecution of war. He recalled upon this occaſion, all the arguments ſo often adduced in proof of their incapacity, eſpecially the continual warnings and predictions of what would happen in conſequence

of their obſtinacy, all which were at the preſent moment literally verified.

He was warmly ſeconded by the Lords in oppoſition. They explicitly complained of an occult, but irreſiſtible influence, that governed unſeen, and directed all thoſe unhappy operations that had brought this country to the diſtreſsful ſituation it now experienced. To this hidden power, miniſtry had for years ſubmitted with an acquieſcence and ſervility unknown to former days, and unworthy of the character of Engliſhmen. This was the grievance it behoved all parties to contribute in removing. Oſtenſible alterations of men had not effected a change of meaſures; theſe ſtill continued under the ſame concealed guidance; and whoever had the courage to oppoſe it, was ſure of being diſcarded.

Miniſtry denied the charge of yielding to this ſecret influence, with great animation and ſtrength of expreſſion, and diſclaimed all impulſe in their conduct, but that of their own perſuaſion of its rectitude: they were ready to meet any examination of their conduct: if they had erred, it was from miſtake in their own judgment, but by no means through an implicit, or venal acquieſcence, as it had been inſinuated, in the judgment and dictates of others.

The preſent time required unanimity in the common defence. The addreſs propoſed to the Houſe, recommended, in fact, no more. It was utterly unſeaſonable, at this critical hour, to make ſuch an object a point of diſcuſſion. Without unanimity the affairs of the kingdom, greatly as they were embarraſſed, would be thrown into ſuch confuſion, as to endanger its very exiſtence. It would be time enough, after providing for the general ſafety, to inſtitute an inquiry iuto the conduct of miniſters: but it would betray more perſonal pique than public ſpirit, to call them to an account at a time when all

all the abilities of men of all parties, would be wanted for the immediate ſervice of the ſtate.

Men who profeſſed impartiality ought to diſtinguiſh between miſconduct and misfortune. True it was, their plans had miſcarried; but that was no proof they were imprudently framed. Many cauſes independent of miniſterial vigilance and ſagacity, might concur in defeating the beſt conceived deſigns. It was raſh and inequitable in oppoſition, to condemn the framers of public meaſures, merely on account of their failure. The public was well acquainted with the difficulty of the taſk impoſed upon them; but the national honour was ſo deeply concerned in it, that unbiaſſed people were equally convinced of the neceſſity of not ſhrinking from it; and would readily forgive them, if, after having acted the part of men, they had not executed what was found impracticable.

It was replied by oppoſition, that it was principally at ſuch critical times as the preſent, that it became the duty of Parliament to inſiſt upon the removal of obnoxious miniſters. Facts were ſtronger than all argumentation; and they proved, beyond the power of denial, that miniſters were unfortunate in all their enterprizes. This was a ſufficient reaſon for the public to withdraw its confidence from them. The times were too preſſing to enquire into the cauſes of their miſcarriages; theſe were ſo perpetual and unvarying, that the patience of the nation was exhauſted. They ſhowed there muſt be a radical ſource of impropriety at the bottom of all their projects, that rendered them impracticable. It was indiſpenſible, therefore, to commit the management of affairs into other hands. They could not be worſe adminiſtered than at preſent: and a change of men was the only chance left to produce an alteration for the better.

It was obſerved at the ſame time, that notwithſtanding the provocation given by France, by this public declaration in favour of the Colonies, there was no apparent and immediate neceſſity for plunging into a war with ſo formidable a power, in the embarraſſed ſituation of this kingdom. The treatment we had received from France was very mortifying; but if we were wiſe, we ſhould ſuppreſs our reſentment at the preſent hour, and reſerve it for a more convenient opportunity. In the continual viciſſitude of political events on the continent of Europe, we need not wait long for a favourable occaſion of returning the blow given us by France in the preſent inſtance.

Nor ſhould we forget, that we had ourſelves, on former occaſions, acted a part ſimilar to that of which we now ſo grievouſly complained. When the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands threw off the yoke of Spain, England befriended them in the ſame manner France did now the United States of America. When France itſelf was torn by civil diſſentions, we made it our buſineſs to interfere, and to eſpouſe the cauſe of one of the parties. The frequency of the practice had rendered it a common rule of European politics. Every miniſtry was watchful of what paſſed among its neighbours, to the well known intent of profiting by their diviſions. It was by a ſtrict and conſtant obſervance of this maxim, that ſome of the greateſt princes and miniſters had made ſo ſplendid a figure. Queen Elizabeth in England, and Cardinal Richelieu in France, had ruled with ſo much proſperity, and riſen to ſuch fame, by never loſing ſight of it. The ſafeſt way of revenging ourſelves, would be by following their example.

Inſtead of a vain and fruitleſs reprobation of the conduct of France, which it was highly probable this country would have adopted, had this ancient rival

rival afforded the like opportuniry of doing her injury, we ought rather to turn our indignation upon that miniſtry, whoſe imbecility had brought ſo many calamities upon the nation; and to uſe, at the ſame time, the ſureſt and moſt obvious means of extricating ourſelves. Prudence pointed at a recognition of American independency, as the moſt effectual. Whatever ſyſtem we now propoſed for our conduct abroad, unleſs we took this previous ſtep, we ſhould ſtill continue in a track of error and difficulty. There was much more of danger in rejecting, than of diſhonour in adopting it: by the firſt we laid ourſelves open to a combination of enemies, too powerful to encounter ſucceſsfully in our preſent ſituation; by the ſecond, we ſhewed our diſcretion in yielding to neceſſity, which was a duty incumbent on all ſound politicians, and which the wiſeſt and braveſt of men had often times, by their practice, clearly proved they accounted no diſgrace.

This was one of the ſevereſt altercations that ever fell out in the Houſe of Lords; it was attended with particular virulence and perſonality. On putting the queſtion, the addreſs was carried, diveſted of any cenſure on miniſtry, by a majority, upon the diviſion, of one hundred, againſt thirty-ſix.

During theſe parliamentary debates, the ſpeculative part of ſociety, both in England and foreign parts, was contemplating the progreſs of the war, and employed in conſiderations how Great Britain would extricate herſelf out of the many embarraſſments that were daily accumulating upon her from all quarters.

It ſeemed to be univerſally agreed, that the failure of the expedition terminated by the convention of Saratoga, would abſolutely prove deciſive, and turn the ſcale of fortune in ſuch a manner, as to put an end to all attempts on that part of the continent

tinent. It had twice withſtood the attacks of Britain; firſt at Boſton, and now on its back ſettlements. In both attacks, commanders and troops of great ſkill and bravery had miſcarried, after every exertion of which expert officers and valiant ſoldiers were capable. They had yielded to the meer neceſſity of abandoning enterprizes, which, from their very nature, were impracticable; but were at the ſame time of ſuch a complection, that nothing but experience could have diſcovered the difficulties with which they would be attended. Such was the general opinion entertained by politicians at home and abroad.

As no impreſſion could be made on the Northern Colonies, they were now delivered from thoſe apprehenſions that had kept them in continual alarms, and obliged them to retain their whole ſtrength for their home defence. They could now look abroad with ſafety, and extend their aſſiſtance to the Southern Provinces of the continent. This opened a proſpect to the American confederacy, of which the commencement of the campaign juſt ended ſo much to their advantage, afforded them no ſort of hope.

Nor was the ſituation of affairs in thoſe parts that ſtill continued the ſcene of war, more favourable to the views of Great Britain. Notwithſtanding a ſeries of perpetual ſucceſſes in the field, and in every operation of any importance, ſhe ſaw a victorious army, that had proved irreſiſtible in battle, immured, as it were, within the narrow compaſs of a ſingle city, incloſed on all ſides by the enemy it had repeatedly defeated, and compelled to act the part of a garriſon beſieged.

This intrepid body of men, after overcoming every difficulty that ſpirit and reſolution could maſter, began at laſt to perceive that they were waging a war in a country, where every victory they obtained, while it added to their glory, tended ſtill more to their deſtruction. Beyond the ground where

where they fought and defeated their enemies, all was hoſtile and dangerous in the moſt alarming degree. They conquered to no other end than to preſerve their reputation: their moſt brilliant actions were always the moſt fatal; and they reaped no other emolument from the invincible efforts they were continually obliged to make, than the ſatisfaction of having acquitted themſelves like men, who were determined that the honour of their country ſhould remain unſullied.

But it was evident, at the ſame time, that theſe exertions muſt neceſſarily terminate in the ruin of thoſe who made them. Remote from the center of that empire of which they were fighting the battles, an immenſe ocean rolled between them and the only part of the globe from whence they were to receive aſſiſtance.

Hitherto the danger of the ſeas, and the inclemency of ſeaſons, had been the principal impediment of communication with the ſeat of that power from which they were to derive their ſtrength and ſupport; but other obſtacles were now preparing, much more ſerious and perplexing.

The dominion of the ocean, for near two centuries in the poſſeſſion of that power, was now about to be diſputed by the two greateſt potentates in Europe. The ſupplies of every denomination, which the Britiſh armies ſo much wanted, and from which they were cut off in America, were now to force a paſſage of three thouſand miles, through ſeas crouded with fleets and ſquadrons, ſtationed in every latitude to intercept them.

From this proſpect of the obſtacles that would be thrown in the way of all aſſiſtance from Britain, it was concluded that her efforts to continue hoſtilities in America, would meet with ſo many diſcouragements, that ſhe would at laſt be compelled to relinquiſh the attempt of ſubduing that continent.

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Through the ſuperior excellence of her ſeamen and her naval commanders, and the intrepid ſpirit of her people, it was not doubted that ſhe would face her numerous enemies with unconquerable courage, and poſſibly balance the fate of war; but the extraordinary efforts that would be required to compaſs this eſſential point, muſt neceſſarily prevent her from beſtowing a portion of pains and attention ſufficient to embrace ſucceſsfully the many other objects ſhe had in view at the preſent hour. Some of them muſt of conſequence be abandoned, others neglected, or feebly attended, in order to enable her to collect her ſtrength for great and deciſive occaſions.

From the combined review of theſe various conſiderations, no doubt was entertained, that the iſſue of the war would be unproſperous to Great Britain, ſo far as related to North America; and that ſhe would find it neceſſary to ſacrifice this immenſe portion of her empire, in order to ſecure her poſſeſſion of the reſt.

Certain it is, that France entered into this war with every advantage that could poſſibly be deſired. She choſe her own time; ſhe had the command of local opportunities; circumſtances were favourable to her in every reſpect. Never had the French miniſtry manifeſted more prudence than upon this occaſion. It employed the intermediate leiſure between the demiſe of the late king, to the preſent epocha, in the ſilent, but effectual re-eſtabliſhment of the French marine, which had been much neglected in the latter years of the preceding reign. It waited with a patience unuſual to the temper of that nation, until preparations were brought to that maturity, which was requiſite to enable it to enter efficaciouſly the field of action. The enemy to be encountered, was enfeebled by ill ſucceſſes abroad, and ſtill more by diſſentions at home: theſe were

daily

daily becoming ſo ſerious, as to occaſion apprehenſions that they would terminate fatally for the public repoſe.

To theſe conſiderations were added, the general partiality of Europe, to every power that harboured hoſtile deſigns againſt Great Britain. Her treatment of America had, through the artful repreſentations of her enemies, indiſpoſed all the humane and benevolent part of ſociety, and rendered them inimical to her intereſts, and deſirous to ſee an humiliation of her greatneſs. She was depicted as the tyrant of America, and the oppreſſive invader of the rights of nations on the ocean.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Tranſactions in conſequence of the Declaration of France.

1778.

THE declaration of France in favour of America, though it exaſperated the nation, did not in the leaſt ſurprize it. The preparations that had ſo long been making in all the ports of that kingdom, were no ſecret, and it was impoſſible to miſtake their intentions.

The public was, upon this occaſion, no leſs divided in its opinions reſpecting that event, than the Parliament had ſhewn itſelf, in the debates that were carried on with ſo much vehemence in both Houſes. It revived the antipathy to a power, of which the ambition was ſo well known, and had coſt this nation ſuch immenſe treaſures, and ſo much blood to repreſs. The proſpect of the further ſacrifices of men and money, that would now be required to oppoſe its hoſtile views, kindled afreſh the reſentment of old injuries, and in ſome meaſure prepared the people to unite with zeal and chearfulneſs, in the efforts that now became immediately neceſſary to face this ancient and natural enemy.

The people of France imagined, that on declaring themſelves the friends and protectors of America, the conſternation in England would have been ſuch, as inſtantly to have induced the Britiſh miniſtry to accelerate an accommodation with America upon any terms; and that the ſpirit of this nation would have been ſo depreſſed, as to have ſunk at once into deſpair, and compelled government, from its conviction

conviction of the general deſpondency, to have ſubſcribed to any conditions that France and America ſhould have jointly dictated.

Such was the opinion entertained and propagated by the French, and their numerous partiſans throughout Europe. But there were alſo many who diſſented from them; and who from a more ſtrict and impartial inſpection into the character of the Britiſh nation, foreſaw and foretold that this acceſſion of France to the cauſe of America, inſtead of bringing about a pacification, would, on the contrary, increaſe and prolong the war, and in its conſequences extend it perhaps to every part of the globe.

A nation, it was ſaid, ſo long accuſtomed to give laws on the ocean, would not yield, without a ſevere conteſt, the ſuperiority to any other on that element. Some there were, who alledged the decline of the dominion of Holland on the ſea; and predicted that Great Britain would, in its turn, experience the ſame reverſe. But theſe were told that the difference between Great Britain and the Seven Provinces was ſuch as precluded all kind of compariſon. The three kingdoms included in the Britiſh iſlands, compoſed an immenſe tract of land, inhabited by a people who lived on the produce of its ſoil, which was known in moſt parts to vie in fertility, and to exceed in cultivation, the moſt plentiful regions in Europe. Its commerce with foreign countries was founded on its own commodities. Its natural productions were ſo valuable, as to excel in their kind thoſe of all other places; and its fabrications were ſo eſteemed, as to be every where in particular requeſt. Its ſituation as an iſland, afforded a multitude of advantages for the carrying on of naval buſineſs, which no other part of Europe poſſeſſed in equal proportion. Its harbours were more numerous and convenient, and the adjoining

adjoining ſeas afforded greater profit by their fiſheries, than any others in Europe. Add to this, the number and courage of the natives, their ſtrength and expertneſs at ſea, their high ſpirit, their prodigious riches, the excellence of their government, the reſources they poſſeſſed within themſelves, the activity and perſeverance of their diſpoſition. All theſe were objects of conſideration, that ought to be duly weighed, before people ventured to pronounce that their fate would be ſimilar to that of the Dutch, and that after having aſtoniſhed the world by their tranſient greatneſs at ſea, they would, like them, loſe it, and no longer remain that formidable power, which had rendered them ſo long conſpicuous.

The Dutch were undoubtedly a brave and illuſtrious people. Their ſtruggles againſt Spain for the eſtabliſhment of their liberty, and their reſiſtance of the invaſions of France, would always be remembered highly to their honour. But their country was neither extenſive nor fertile. It drew its ſubſiſtence entirely from abroad. Its commerce was precarious, as it did not ariſe from the produce of its own ſoil, and depended on the want of induſtry in other nations. The progreſs made by theſe in the improvement of their own country, and in manufacturing the materials of their own growth, had proportionably leſſened the commerce of Holland. It would in time revert to its primitive inconſiderableneſs, ſhould Europe continue the cultivation of trade and agriculture with the ſame attention and care it had done for many years.

Such were the diſcuſſions that took place about this time in various parts of Europe, in thoſe eſpecially where people were ſolicitous to find reaſons to hope that Great Britain would ſink under the heavy trial that was preparing for her. Thoſe who repreſented her as in a declining condition, were by far

far the more numerous party; and ſuch was the envy and malevolence at that time predominant againſt Great Britain, that it was not without the higheſt diſpleaſure and indignation, they heard the reaſonings of the fewer opponents of their opinions.

It was not, therefore, without ſurprize, they were informed, that in conſequence of the notification from the Court of France to that of Great Britain, this latter was reſolutely preparing to diſpute the empire of America, and that of the ocean, with the two greateſt powers in Europe; and that far from ſeeming intimidated by the arduous conteſt in which they were going to engage, the people appeared, on the contrary, to have gathered freſh ſpirit from the dangers that now threatened them, and to diſplay a greater alacrity and readineſs to exert themſelves, than they had ever done ſince the beginning of the conteſt.

The truth was, that the altercation with the Colonies had not ſufficiently alarmed the nation, to occaſion apprehenſions of any ſort. It was conſidered much more as a miniſterial, than as a national concern. Inſtead of bearing the Americans any reſentment, on account of their reſiſtance, it was applauded by numbers; and till the declaration of Independency, the majority of people was rather inclined to favour, than to condemn them. The ſpirit with which the Coloniſts oppoſed the deſigns of miniſtry, retraced to the nation at large the reſolution with which their anceſtors had, in times paſt, ſtood up in defence of their liberties. In this light, the oppoſition of America met with many warm ſupporters both in ſpeech and writing. As the right of taxation was a ſubject of a very complicated nature, it was hardly a matter of leſs doubt and diſpute on this, than on the other ſide of the Atlantic. It was by the cool and moderate, conſidered as a mere point of ſpeculation, of which, as no clear de-

ciſion of it could be obtained through dint of argument, the final ſettlement ought, for the preſervation of peace and friendſhip between the parent ſtate and its dependencies, to be left to an amicable meeting of both parties, compoſed of individuals reciprocally authoriſed to terminate the difference; and whoſe character ſhould at the ſame time be ſo acceptable to each ſide, as to afford no room to ſuſpect any undue influence to biaſs them in their determinations.

Nor did even the taking up arms by the Colonies excite any anger among the generality. Not expecting they would ſubmit to the pretenſions of Britain, their reſiſtance was viewed but as a natural conſequence of the coercion uſed with them; and thoſe who wiſhed them ſucceſs, were not perhaps the leaſt conſiderable part of the nation.

The declaration of Independence effected an alteration of ſentiments. It was eſteemed by many of the moſt judicious perſons in this country, a meaſure wholly unneceſſary, and without recurring to which, America might have compaſſed every point propoſed, by continuing its reſiſtance to Britain, on the ſame footing it had begun. This meaſure occaſioned an alienation from its intereſts in the minds of many of its former adherents. It was looked upon as a wanton abuſe of the ſucceſs, with which it had oppoſed the efforts of the Britiſh miniſtry to bring them to ſubmiſſion, and as an ungrateful return for the warmth with which their cauſe had been eſpouſed in Parliament, and by ſuch multitudes as in the ideas of many amounted to a plurality.

Their conduct in this inſtance, though highly diſapproved, did not, however, create any violent exaſperation. It was ſtill hoped, that if a reconciliation with them could not be obtained upon a ſyſtem of ſubordination to Britain, ſtill it would

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take place on a conviction of the natural advantages to be derived from a connection with a people who were in every reſpect a part of themſelves, and with whom they had lived in perfect amity till this unhappy difference.

A variety of motives contributed to cheriſh this expectation. The Coloniſts muſt have been fully perſuaded, that after what had paſt, no apprehenſions could be reaſonably entertained on their part, that Britain, after a concluſion of the preſent quarrel, would ever be ſo unwiſe as to renew an attempt which had proved ſo unſucceſsful. An accommodation founded on a reciprocation of benefits, and on a footing of equality, was deemed an object no leſs deſirable to the one party, than to the other. Such a corrreſpondence with any other country, as muſt prove inimical to Britain, appeared a buſineſs of too much intricacy, and attended with too many changes and deviations from their former uſages and precedents, to meet with their concurrence.—Language, religion, government, and long eſtabliſhed notions, ways, and manners, would, it was thought, form an inſuperable bar to their preferring a foreign connection to that of Britain.

Such were the general ideas prevailing in this country, when the Colonies renounced their dependence. The ſupport they received from other parts, did not at firſt alter theſe ideas, as it was natural they ſhould ſtrive to procure the ſupplies they wanted wherever they could be found.

But when it was ſeen, that beſides neceſſaries of this kind, which they were not blamed for purchaſing from whoever had them to ſell, they began to harbour deſigns of the moſt inimical nature to this country, it became indiſpenſibly neceſſary to view them in a hoſtile light. It was with great repugnance that ſentiments of this nature were adopt-

ed, as it was with much grief perceived that the hopes of a cordial reconciliation were now at an end, and that after having caſt off their ſubordination, they had alſo determined to diſſolve the ties of friendſhip that had ſo long ſubſiſted between them and Great Britain, and to ſide with its moſt inveterate enemies.

The declaration of France completed the revolution that had been gradually taking place in the opinions of men on their being repeatedly apprized of the determination of Congreſs to break aſunder all the bonds of former amity, and to unite themſelves in the cloſeſt manner with that kingdom.

Great courage and undauntedneſs was manifeſted upon this critical emergency, by the cool and conſiderate part of the nation. As in all countries there are people upon whom events of this ſort are apt to make much more impreſſion than they ought, all due precautions were taken to remove their apprehenſions, and to ſhew them, that the danger was far leſs than they imagined, and that with prudence and management this country would be fully able to cope with its numerous enemies.

Thoſe of whom it chiefly behoved government to keep up the ſpirit on this occaſion, were the holders of national ſtock, and the moneyed men, from whom the funds for public exigencies were to be ſupplied. They were not a little alarmed, at firſt, by the declaration of France: but they ſoon recovered from their fears, on a mature conſideration of the reſpective ſtate of the finances in France and in England. Such reſources were manifeſted to them to be in the poſſeſſion of this country, as would empower it for a long duration to maintain the moſt vigorous conteſt; and notwithſtanding the pretences of the French miniſtry, there appeared good grounds to ſuſpect that a failure of means would incline them to a pacification.

cification much more ſpeedily than was either their expectation or intent.

The French, in the mean time, purſuant to the precedent in the late war, reſolved to perplex the councils of this country with the terrors of an invaſion. Multitudes of regiments were aſſembled from all parts of that kingdom, and marched down to the ſea ſide, where they formed large encampments oppoſite to the ſhores of Britain.

Though an invaſion was by no means apprehended at the preſent hour, as it could not, in good policy, take place, till a ſuperiority was obtained at ſea; yet to quiet the apprehenſions of the people, and to ſhew all Europe, as well as the French, that Britain was well prepared to meet them, orders were iſſued to draw out and embody the militia, which, happily for this country, was now compoſed of men in every reſpect as well exerciſed and diſciplined as any regular troops.

Great complaints, however, were made, that a ſquadron of twelve ſhips of the line, under command of the Count d'Eſtaing, had ſailed from Toulon unobſtructed. America was undoubtedly the the object of its deſtination; but no ſquadron had been employed either to diſpute its paſſage through the Straits of Gibraltar, or to follow and watch its motions. It was much to be feared the inferiority of the naval force under Lord Howe, would expoſe him to be totally defeated, and the whole fleet of tranſports to be taken or deſtroyed by the enemy, which would, of courſe, occaſion the entire ruin of the army now employed in America.

This matter was taken up with great warmth in Parliament; and much cenſure paſſed on miniſtry for not acting with more vigilance in a caſe of ſuch importance. It was repreſented that the armament at Toulon had been ſo long preparing, that its

ſtrength and intent had, for many months paſt, been the univerſal object of attention in all Europe.

To this it was replied, that the difficulty of manning, in due time, a ſquadron of ſufficient force to intercept the French Admiral, had enabled him to ſail, unmoleſted, through the Straits. The trade of the kingdom was ſo extenſive, and ſuch a number of ſeamen abroad at this time, that without diveſting the fleet deſtined for the guard of the realm of its neceſſary complement of men, it would have been impracticable to fit out a force for the purpoſe of diſputing the paſſage; but that a powerful ſquadron was now in readineſs to follow him, and would arrive in America time enough to join the fleet and forces there, and to defeat all the attempts of the enemy.

In the mean time, the reality and imminence of the dangers with which the kingdom was ſurrounded, engaged the attention of both Houſes in the moſt ſerious manner. The Commons unanimouſly paſſed a vote of credit, to enable the King to put the nation in a ſtate of immediate defence; and in the Houſe of Lords a motion was made by the Duke of Richmond to recall the fleet and army from America, and to ſtation both where they might protect thoſe parts of the Britiſh dominions that lay moſt expoſed to the enemy.

This motion occaſioned a ſevere debate. Thoſe Lords who eſpouſed the Duke's opinion, ſupported it with many ſtrong arguments, drawn from the neceſſity of conſulting the preſervation of the realm, which was now threatened itſelf ſo evidently, that unleſs it was placed in a poſture of the moſt vigorous reſiſtance, it would be moſt certainly the firſt object, againſt which a foreign attack would be directed.

Thoſe who diſapproved of the motion, contended that the remaining ſtrength of regular forces, added

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to the militia, which in its preſent ſtate was little, if at all inferior to them, would compoſe ſo numerous and formidable an army, as need not apprehend any invaſion whatever; and that the fleet was in a condition to meet that of France with every reaſonable hope of ſucceſs.

While ſecured in this manner from any hoſtile attempt at home, there was no occaſion deſpairingly to throw up all hopes of ſucceeding abroad. The relinquiſhment of our Colonies would lower us in the eſtimation of all Europe. It was expected that the leaſt we could do, was nobly to ſtruggle for a dominion ſo long our own. Were we to loſe it, we ſtill ought to preſerve our reputation. But this would certainly be loſt by the abandonment of our American dependencies in the manner propoſed; it would be like retreating from the field of battle on the very appearance of the foe. The arrogance and preſumption of the French on ſuch behaviour in the Engliſh nation, would become intolerable:—they would repreſent, and would indeed have a right to think us a timorous, degenerate race; they would in conſequence, treat us with all manner of ſcorn, and proceed from inſult to inſult, till they had compelled us to throw away this pliant forbearing diſpoſition, and to reſume our former character of firmneſs and reſolution. Were it not better, therefore, never to lay it down, but to continue vigorouſly in the purſuit of the meaſures we had already adopted? Should they fail;—ſhould the chances of war prove unfavourable, we ſhould ſtill have acted a bold and intrepid part, and our reputation would remain unſullied: we could always treat with arms in our hands; and the conſciouſneſs of our valour, and our determination never to yield to ignoble terms, would not fail, in the iſſue to obtain ſuch as were honourable.

Such were the reaſons offered by thoſe who diſapproved of the propoſal to abandon America. The majority ſided with them, and it was determined to ſupport the conteſt with the utmoſt perſevetance.

In the mean time the inquiry into the ſtate of the nation continued with unabated aſſiduity in both Houſes. In the Houſe of Peers, the Duke of Richmond, its principal conductor, aſſiſted in what related to the naval department by the Duke of Bolton and the Earls of Effingham and Briſtol, had brought all matters relating to it into ſuch a clear and perſpicuous arrangement, as afforded ſatisfaction to all parties. Though it had proved offenſive in ſome reſpects to miniſtry, yet the information it afforded was highly uſeful and requiſite at the time; it led to particulars that greatly wanted elucidation, and placed the general affairs of the nation in their proper light.

He now put an end to that laborious and intricate inquiry, by one of the moſt reſolute and animated ſpeeches that ever had been pronounced in that aſſembly. Its profeſſed intent was to lay before the Throne the real undiſguiſed ſituation of the kingdom, as reſulting from that inquiry; the profuſion in the adminiſtration of the finances, the defective ſtate of the navy, and its incompetence to the exigencies of the ſtate at this perilous ſeaſon, the aſtoniſhing accumulation of the public debt in three years war. Such, he aſſerted, were the conſequences of the imprudence and incapacity of the preſent miniſters. They had miſled the King, tarniſhed the luſtre of the Britiſh crown, diſmembered the empire, waſted the public treaſures, impaired the credit and commerce of the nation, diſgraced its arms, and weakened its naval power. After exciting a civil war between the two principal parts of the Britiſh empire, they had, by their obſtinate refuſal

refuſal of proferred reconciliation, driven the one part into an alliance with the greateſt enemy of this country, and involved it in the greateſt dangers it had ever experienced.

After a variety of other expreſſions no leſs pointed and ſevere, he inſiſted, as he had done before, that the only meaſure of ſafety was to recall the Britiſh forces from the Colonies, and to conclude an accommodation with them upon the moſt advantageous terms that could be obtained. For thoſe reaſons he moved an addreſs to that purpoſe.

In this opinion, however, oppoſition was not unanimous. The Earl of Chatham reſiſted it with a ſtrength of determination, and a vehemence of ſpeech, that were peculiar on this occaſion. The Earl of Shelburne, whoſe eloquence and abilities had long rendered him conſpicuous, embraced ſimilar ſentiments. They jointly conſidered the independency of America as the termination of Britiſh grandeur. The latter emphatically ſtiled it the "ſetting for ever of the Britiſh ſun." All dangers and all trials were to be encountered ſooner than ſubmit to ſuch a diſmemberment. Great Britain was in poſſeſſion of ample reſources to prevent ſuch a diſaſter. The numbers and ſpirit of her people, their riches and their ſtrength were greater than her foes ſuſpected, and even than ſhe herſelf could well aſcertain till they had been juſtly tried. The greatneſs ſo which ſhe had riſen, was the work of her bold and daring genius. It was by ſoaring above timid rules, and venturing out of the ordinary track of common politicians, the noble and ſtupendous fabric of Britiſh power had been erected, and her dominions extended to every quarter of the globe. The ſame councils that had raiſed her ſo high, would ſtill preſerve her glory unimpaired, if they were followed with the ſame ſpirit that firſt dictated them.

Thoſe

Thoſe who adhered to the Duke of Richmond's opinion, allowed the general truth and rectitude of what was alledged; but they aſſerted, at the ſame time, that no circumſtances in any former period of the Britiſh hiſtory, bore any reſemblance to the preſent. We contended in paſt quarrels with our enemies; but we now were contending with our friends; the partners of our ancient good fortune; the companions of our better days. While they compoſed one people with us, we were jointly invincible; but they were become our bittereſt foes. They were the true deſcendants of our anceſtors: intrepid and firm in their determinations, they had reſolved to ſubmit no longer to our authority; and the times were ſo favourable to their pretenſions, that notwithſtanding our power by ſea and land, they had withſtood us contrary to our expectations, and to thoſe of many others. They were now ſtrengthened with the additional aſſiſtance of all our natural enemies, while we had not a ſingle ally.

Such a ſituation called for prudence much more than valour. We had exhibited ſufficient ſpecimens of this; but as it avowedly was want of wiſdom that involved us in a conteſt with our Colonies, to perſevere in it without any reaſonable proſpect of overcoming them, would be but a continuance of our infatuation, the leſs pardonable, as experience had taught us the inutility of ſuch an attempt.

But theſe reaſonings did not avail, and the majority was againſt the addreſs as before. A proteſt was ſigned, however, upon this occaſion, by twenty Peers; wherein they condemned, with the utmoſt freedom and aſperity of language, the deſign to perſiſt in the meaſures carried on in the Colonies.

It

It was during the debate of this day, that the Earl of Chatham, while engaged in a warm ſpeech againſt the acknowledgment of American independency, was ſeized with a fainting fit that put an end to his diſcourſe. It was the laſt that he ever ſpoke in that Houſe. He died about a month after, on the eleventh of May, in his ſeventieth year, leaving behind him the character of one of the greateſt orators and ſtateſmen, this, or any other country had ever produced. The greateſt honours were paid to his memory. His eminent ſervices to this country, and the high degree of ſplendour and power to which it aroſe under his adminiſtration, were gratefully and earneſtly commemorated in both Houſes of Parliament, eſpecially in that of Commons. His remains were interred, and a magnificent monument erected to his remembrance in Weſtminſter Abbey, at the public expence. Nor did the gratitude of the nation reſt here. As from the exceſſive diſintereſtedneſs of his character, he had left his family in circumſtances unequal to the dignity to which he had been raiſed, proviſion was made for the payment of his debts, and an honourable income was ſettled upon his poſterity.

On the third of June a period was put to this memorable ſeſſion; not, however, without the loud complaints of the oppoſition. The dimiſſion of Parliament, at a time when events were hourly expected of the moſt ſerious importance, was repreſented as highly improper. In ſuch a complication of difficulties and perils, the people required ſome viſible object to animate their hopes, and infuſe into them ſentiments of courage and firmneſs. It was now, they ſaid, paſt all denial, that the preſent miniſtry had utterly loſt the confidence of the public: none but ſuch as benefited immediately through their means, expreſſed any adherence to them; the Parliament was therefore

the only body of men, on which the nation could, with any ſafety, rely, in this day of terror: it was there, only, thoſe individuals would be found, whoſe wiſdom and uprightneſs would remedy the many evils occaſioned by the errors of miniſtry. Such were the ſentiments of a large proportion of the public at this period of univerſal anxiety.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

Tranſactions and Military Operations in America.

1778.

WHILE the Parliament of Great Britain was taken up in the many diſcuſſions that employed the attention and abilities of its members during this important ſeſſion, the agents of Congreſs were no leſs buſily occupied in forming connections with the enemies of this country, and preparing obſtacles to thoſe deſigns againſt them, which, from the perſeveringneſs of its character, they doubted not it would labour to inforce to the laſt.

Soon after the declaration of Independency, the Congreſs had determined to employ for this purpoſe the moſt active and able individuals it could procure. Several were accordingly ſent to the different courts and ſtates of Europe, where they acquitted themſelves of the buſineſs committed to their charge, with great acuteneſs and dexterity.

The courts to which theſe commiſſioners were diſpatched, were thoſe of France, Spain, Vienna, Pruſſia, and Tuſcany. Theſe were the powers of whom they chiefly ſuſpected the friendſhip and good wiſhes to Great Britain: the two firſt, eſpecially, they confidently relied upon as ſure allies.

The inſtructions given by Congreſs to their commiſſioners, were to aſſure theſe reſpective courts, that notwithſtanding the endeavours that might be made on the part of Great Britain, to repreſent the Colonies as diſpoſed to return to the obedience of that crown, it was their firm determination, at all events, to maintain their independence.

They

They were to uſe every means in their power to procure the aſſiſtance of the Emperor of Germany, the Kings of Pruſſia, Spain, and France, in preventing Ruſſian, German, and othes foreign troops from being ſent to North America for hoſtile purpoſes againſt the United States, and for obtaining a recall of thoſe already ſent.

They were particularly commiſſioned to uſe their utmoſt efforts to induce the Court of France to aſſiſt the United States againſt Britain, either by attacking the King's Electoral dominions in Germany, or the poſſeſſions of Great Britain in the Weſt, or in the Eaſt Indies.

They propoſed, that in caſe Britain could be diſpoſſeſſed of Newfoundland, Cape Breton, and Nova Scotia, by the united efforts of France and the United States, thoſe iſlands ſhould remain to theſe, and the fiſhery be divided between both, to the excluſion of Great Britain.

As a further motive to the Court of France to eſpouſe their cauſe, ſhould the preceding inducement not prove ſufficient, they were to offer an abſolute ceſſion to this crown of the property of the Britiſh iſlands in the Weſt Indies, taken by the joint force of France and the United States. They engaged in this caſe to furniſh, at their own expence, a ſufficient quantity of proviſions to carry on ſuch an expedition againſt thoſe iſlands, together with a certain number of well-appointed frigates.

The commiſſioners were to form a treaty with the Court of Spain, as ſimilar, as it was practicable and convenient, to that made with France.

Should the Court of Spain incline to join with the United States in a war with Great Britain, they offered their aſſiſtance in reducing Penſacola to the poſſeſſion of Spain, provided the ſubjects of the United States ſhould enjoy the free and uninterrupted

rupted navigation of the river Miſſiſippi, and the uſe of the harbour of Penſacola.

They further offered, in caſe the Court of Portugal ſhould have, in compliance with the requeſt of the Britiſh miniſtry, expelled the ſhipping of the United States from its ports, or confiſcated its veſſels, to declare war againſt that kingdom, if that meaſure ſhould be agreeable to, and meet with the ſupport of France and Spain.

The Commiſſioners at the Court of Pruſſia, were to propoſe ſuch a treaty of commerce and friendſhip with that Monarch as ſhould not be unacceptable to France or Spain.

Such were the directions of Congreſs to its Commiſſioners in the capital courts of Europe: but excluſive of theſe, other agents were employed in various other places, and nothing was neglected to eſtabliſh the intereſt of the American States, wherever it was deemed neceſſary.

While theſe tranſactions were occupying the attention of the politicians in Europe, the Britiſh and American armies were confined to their winter quarters. Valley Forge, where General Waſhington was poſted in a hutted camp, had nothing to recommend it but its poſition. From thence he could obſerve all the motions, and be quickly apprized of every deſign of the Britiſh commander. Notwithſtanding his actual inferiority in point of number, he lay in a country, where, on the leaſt emergency, he could be reinforced with a ſtrength ſufficient to attempt any enterprize that he might think proper to project. The ſuddenneſs of his attack at Germantown was not forgotten, and the fertility of his mind in the invention of plans and means to harraſs and attack, were experimentally known. The Americans too, were no longer new and inexpert in military matters. In the courſe of three years, they had ſo well profited by continual

nual experience, that they were well inured to the ſervice, and diſplayed, occaſionally, equal courage and ſkill.

Againſt ſuch a General, and ſuch men, it was neceſſary to keep a perpetual guard, eſpecially as it was in theſe unexpected onſets they were moſt dextrous and to be apprehended. To obviate all dangers of this kind, the Britiſh General directed redoubts and lines to be conſtructed around the city of Philadelphia, by which it was effectually ſecured againſt any ſurprize.

The army that had been under the command of General Burgoyne was now at Boſton; from whence, on its arrival thither, it had expected, according to the articles of capitulation, to have been ſhortly tranſported to England; but difficulties totally unforeſeen and unexpected, now ſtood in its way.

It had been requeſted by the Britiſh commander, that the embarkation of this army ſhould take place either at New York, or at Rhode Iſland, for the greater conveniency of the ſhipping, inſtead of Boſton, from whence, according to the letter of the Convention, they were to take their departure.—As it was not doubted that this propoſal would be complied with, the ſhips were now arrived in the harbour of Rhode Iſland, and waiting there for the arrival of the troops: but to their great ſurprive, the Congreſs poſitively refuſed them the permiſſion to embark, under pretence of its ſuſpecting that ſiniſter deſigns were intended on their part. This propoſal, it was inſinuated, was made in order to have an opportunity of joining the other Britiſh troops, and then framing a pretext to break or evade the terms of the Convention, and thus to remain in America to act againſt the United States. They urged as a proof that their ſuſpicions were well grounded, that the twenty-ſix tranſports waiting to take them on board, were not ſufficient for ſo large a body as near

near ſix thouſand men, of which they conſiſted, eſpecially in a winter voyage to Europe; and that it was highly improbable that they could already have been provided with the neceſſary quantity of ſtores, and other demands requiſite for that purpoſe, on ſo ſhort a notice, and in the preſent circumſtances of the Britiſh fleet and army reſpecting proviſions.

The officers of this army had made heavy complaints of improper treatment in regard to their quarters, which were not conformable to what they had been promiſed in the capitulation. General Burgoyne happening on this occaſion to uſe ſome ſtrong expreſſions, they were conſtrued into a formal complaint that the Americans had violated the articles of capitulation. This they directly declared a matter of the moſt ſerious nature: they interpreted this complaint as an implied intention to conſider the Convention as no longer binding, the moment they were out of the power of the Americans. Such a declaration, it was urged on the part of Congreſs, made in the preſent circumſtance of their being in detention, would be conſidered as a juſtification of their acting as if abſolved from all the obligation of obſerving the capitulation, as ſoon as they were at large.

Equally aſtoniſhed and exaſperated at this treatment, General Burgoyne took all due pains to explain the paſſage in his letter that had occaſioned it. The meaning of it, he inſiſted, was only to complain of improper uſage, and to require a more punctual adherence to the articles of capitulation. The officers, to obviate all difficulties, unanimouſly ſigned their parole, and offered, with the General, to put their hands to any paper acknowledging the validity of the Convention.

But theſe expoſtulations were fruitleſs. Congreſs, in this matter, ſeemed to act from a previous deter-

mination to recede, on no account, from the meaſure it had adopted. This occaſioned a variety of ſevere ſtrictures on its conduct. The political part of the world conſidered their behaviour as a deed of inevitable neceſſity for their preſervation. Notwithſtanding the total defeat of the expedition under General Burgoyne, the army he commanded might, on its return to England, have eaſily been replaced by a like number; the addition of which to the forces at Philadephia and New York, would have proved a very conſiderable ſupply at this juncture, and enabled the Britiſh army to have begun the approaching campaign with much greater adventages than they could expect, until they had received reinforcements.

Theſe were repreſented as the real motives that induced the Congreſs to paſs a reſolution in the beginning of the year ſeventy-eight, by which the departure of General Burgoyne, and the army under him, was ſuſpended till the Court of Great Britain had notified to Congreſs in explicit and formal terms, its ratification of the Convention at Saratoga. In this manner a body of near ſix thouſand veterans were detained priſoners, and the apprehenſions of the Britiſh army's being reinforced with a like number completely removed.

On the return of ſpring, the Britiſh troops in Philadelphia made ſeveral ſucceſsful excurſions, in order to procure forage, and open the communications neceſſary for the conveyance of ſupplies.—Among thoſe who ſignalized themſelves on theſe occaſions, were Colonels Mawhood, Abercromby, and Major Maitland. The firſt made a deſcent on the coaſt of Jerſey, near a place called Salem, where he diſperſed a conſiderable force collected there to oppoſe him. The ſecond, on notice of a choſen body of the enemy having taken poſſeſſion of an advantageous ground, at no great diſtance from Philadelphia,

ladelphia, attacked them by ſurprize, and compelled them to retire with conſiderable loſs. The third, proceeding up the river, above Philadelphia, deſtroyed all the enemy's ſhipping that was ſtationed between that city and Trenton. The loſs they ſuſtained was exceedingly great. Some expeditions of the like nature were made by the Britiſh troops quartered in Rhode Iſland, and were attended with equal ſucceſs.

The Americans complained that the Britiſh ſoldiery committed the greateſt exceſſes upon theſe occaſions, and acted in a manner unwarranted by the laws of nations. However true or exaggerated theſe complaints might be, they made a powerful impreſſion over the whole continent, and rendered the Britiſh military extremely odious.

In the mean time, the Congreſs was indefatigable in recurring to every method which it could deviſe, to encourage the people reſolutely to prepare for the the next campaign. It was confidently circulated throughout the Colonies, that, in all probability, this would be the laſt. Such meaſures were repreſented to have been taken, as would compel Britain to look at home, and conſult her ſafety with ſo much attention, as would prevent her from dividing it abroad. Such friendſhips and alliances would be formed, as would entirely change the face of affairs, and render Britain the ſole object of defence to its inhabitants.

Inſpirited by theſe aſſurances, which were in ſome meaſure well-founded, and not in the leaſt doubted by the Americans, they began accordingly to flatter themſelves that an end of their ſufferings was approaching, and that in the ſpace of a few months, they would obtain the peaceable and unmoleſted poſſeſſion of their independency.

General Waſhington was fully convinced that the following campaign, if not entirely deciſive, would

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bring matters to ſuch an iſſue, as would eſſentially influence the remainder of the war. In order to avail himſelf of every advantage that fortune or good conduct could procure, he determined to effect ſuch a reformation in the diſcipline of his army, as might at once remove all impediments to its quickeſt motions. All heavy and ſuperfluous baggage was ſtruck off; portmanteaus and ſacks were ſubſtituted in lieu of cheſts and boxes, and packhorſes, inſtead of waggons: no kind of incumbrance eſcaped his notice, and he gave himſelf the example, by diſmiſſing everykind of ſuperfluity from his own attendance.

In order to increaſe, at the ſame time, a martial ſpirit among the upper claſſes, it was recommended by a public reſolution of Congreſs, to all the young gentlemen of the different Colonies, to form themſelves into companies of cavalry, to ſerve at their own expence during the campaign, promiſing them ſuch treatment and attention as were due to their rank.

While the Congreſs was making the arrangements neceſſary for a reſolute defence, the Britiſh army was equally taken up in preparing for a vigorous proſecution of the next campaign. They promiſed themſelves a reinforcement of twenty thouſand men, and entertained no doubt, with ſuch an addition of ſtrength, to put a complete period to the war before the end of the year.

From the continual hoſtilities in which they were engaged, they had now contracted an intereſt in the war, which made them conſider it as their own, and rendered them eager to terminate it in the manner that had been firſt held out to them,—by conqueſt, and a total ſubjection of the enemy to the terms preſcribed by Britain.

Such was the diſpoſition of the Britiſh army, when the intelligence arrived about the middle of April,

April, of the conciliatory bill brought into Parliament by the miniſter.

The ſurpriſe and indignation expreſſed by the whole army on this occaſion, ſhowed how little they expected an alteration of ſentiments in England, and how warmly they felt for the cauſe. It grieved them that the ſtile of ſuperiority, which they had hitherto aſſumed with the Americans, was to be laid aſide, and that they were to be treated on terms of equality. The aſpiring hopes they had cheriſhed of being ſoon able to cruſh all reſiſtance, were now to be converted into conceſſions to an enemy they held in contempt, and looked upon as more than half conquered.

Such were the ſentiments with which the Britiſh military received the intelligence of the conciliatory bill. Both officers and ſoldiers equally concurred in the warmeſt expreſſions and denotations of anger and reſentment. Some even tore their cockades off their hats, and trampled them under their feet; they conſidered themſelves as men deprived of their honour, and as if a victory had been unjuſtly ſnatched out of their hands.

If the natives of Britain felt ſuch emotions, thoſe of the American Loyaliſts were inexpreſſibly greater. They now ſaw themſelves diveſted for ever of all the hopes they had formed of being reinſtated in their former ſtations and poſſeſſions. In firm confidence of this, they had openly taken up arms in the cauſe of Britain. Baniſhment from their own country, and abandonment by another, was now, ſaid they, to be their future fate.

As ſoon as this bill was arrived, it was carefully circulated among the Coloniſts by the agents to the Britiſh government; but it proved of little effect, and met with ſmall notice. Congreſs, in order to ſhow their diſregard of it, ordered it to be publicly printed in the newſpapers. Governor Tryon had ſent ſeveral copies of it to General Waſhington, re-

queſting that he would permit them to be circulated in his army. The General returned him an anſwer, incloſing a printed copy of it in a public paper, with the reſolutions of the Congreſs in conſequence of it.

Theſe reſolutions were, that whoever ſhould preſume to make any ſeparate agreement with the Commiſſioners appointed by Great Britain ſhould be deemed a public enemy to America; that the United States could not with any propriety hold any correſpondence with the Commiſſioners, unleſs the Britiſh fleets and armies were previouſly withdrawn, or the independency of the United States formally acknowledged. The Congreſs warned at the ſame time the Colonies not to ſuffer themſelves to be deceived into ſecurity by any offers, but to uſe their moſt ſtrenuous exertions to ſend their reſpective proportions of troops to the field with all diligence. In theſe reſolutions Congreſs was unanimous.

The general anſwer from thoſe among the Americans to whom the conciliatory bill was addreſſed, was—That the day of reconciliation upon ſuch terms was paſt; that the barbarous method with which Britain had proſecuted hoſtilities, had extinguiſhed the filial regard once profeſſed for that country. The haughtineſs aſſumed upon all occaſions of intercourſe, ſufficiently ſhowed of what little eſteem and value the Americans were in the eye of thoſe who held the reins of power in Britain: they could not, therefore, with common prudence, any more than conſiſtent with their feelings, commit themſelves again to the direction of thoſe by whom they were ſo much diſregarded, and by whom they had been ſo much ill uſed.

In the beginning of May, Mr. Simeon Deane arrived from France at York Town, the reſidence of the Congreſs ever ſince the Britiſh army had taken poſſeſſion of Philadelphia. He brought with him copies

copies of the two treaties of commerce and alliance between France and the United States, in order to receive the ratification of Congreſs. He laid before them all the particulars relating to the negociation, and a variety of other intereſting accounts.

The contents of theſe ſeveral diſpatches were immediately communicated to the public, and ſpecial care was taken to repreſent the conduct of France in the moſt advantageous colours. They were told that in theſe tranſactions no advantage had been taken of the difficult ſituation of the Americans, to extort ſuch conditions from them as neceſſity alone could have induced them to grant. France had, on the contrary, acted with the higheſt honour and generoſity. Deſirous that the treaties once made ſhould be durable, and the amity between both nations ſubſiſt for ever, the French miniſtry had determined that they ſhould each find their intereſt in the continuance, as well as in the commencement of it. The terms therefore were ſuch, as if they had been made with a ſtate in the fulneſs of ſtrength and power. France, in ſhort, had engaged to aſſiſt America with all her might, and conſented, at the ſame time, that whenever Britain offered terms of peace, the United States might accept of them: the only condition required by France on their part was, that they ſhould never return to the obedience of that Crown.

Beſides the intelligence relating to the alliance with France, the people were alſo informed that the independence of America was a favourite object with all the commercial powers in Europe. They had waited for an acknowledgment of the independence of America by France, and would ſoon follow the example of that kingdom. Spain, there was no doubt, would be determined by the conduct of the elder branch of the Houſe of Bourbon; the Emperor, and the King of Pruſſia, were entirely

favourable. The Pruſſian miniſtry, in particular, had informed one of the American plenipotentiaries, that the United States need not be apprehenſive that Great Britain would receive any further reinforcements of troops from the European powers. Ruſſia and Denmark would ſend none: ſome hundreds might be furniſhed by thoſe German Princes who had troops in America in the Britiſh pay; but even theſe would be found with difficulty, as every obſtruction would be thrown in the way of raiſing recruits for that ſervice. So averſe to it was the Court of Pruſſia, that the troops of Heſſe and Hanau, in Britiſh pay, were not allowed a paſſage through that monarch's dominions. That monarch had even promiſed to be the ſecond power in Europe to acknowledge their independency.

In addition to this information, they were aſſured, that it was the opinion of all thoſe who were converſant in the affairs of Britain, that ſhe could not hold out more than one campaign in America; that her reſources were near exhauſted, as her credit was ſo much reduced; that the moſt ſerious dangers were impending upon her; upwards of threeſcore thouſand men were encamped on the coaſts of Normandy and Britanny, ready for an immediate deſcent upon England; that the navy of the Houſe of Bourbon amounted already to no leſs than two hundred and ſeventy ſail, ready for ſea, and was daily increaſing; that in the midſt of ſo many enemies, Britain had not a ſingle friend; the character of thoſe who governed that haughty people had indiſpoſed all the world againſt them, and their humiliation was the univerſal wiſh of every ſtate in Europe, without exception.

Such were the repreſentations of Congreſs to the people of the Colonies at large; they were received with the higheſt exultation over the whole continent. A day was appointed by General Waſhing-

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ton for the whole army to celebrate the alliance with France, and it was obſerved with great military magnificence and ſolemnity.

About the end of May, Sir William Howe took his departure for England, leaving the command of the army to Sir Henry Clinton. Previous to his quitting Philadelphia, a moſt ſplendid feſtival and entertainment was given him by the army, as a teſtimony of the high reſpect and affection they bore to his perſon and character.

In the beginning of June, the Commiſſioners appointed by the conciliatory bill arrived from England. They were the Earl of Carliſle, Mr. Eden, and Governor Johnſtone. Immediately on their arrival, they directed their ſecretary, Doctor Ferguſon, to repair to Congreſs, in order to notify their arrival, and to preſent their commiſſion, with other papers, and to open the negociations with them; but he was refuſed a paſſport, and they were obliged to ſend them by another conveyance.

In the letter which was addreſſed to the Congreſs by the Commiſſioners, they aſſured them of an earneſt deſire to re-eſtabliſh the tranquility of the empire on a baſis of equal freedom; they reminded them that cordial reconciliation had in others, as well as the Britiſh nation, ſucceeded to diviſions no leſs violent than thoſe which now agitated it. They acquainted them that the acts of Parliament relating to America, which were now tranſmitted to them, had paſſed unanimouſly, and ſhowed the diſpoſition of Great Britain "to come up to every wiſh that America had expreſſed, either in the hour of temperate deliberation, or of the utmoſt apprehenſion of danger to liberty."

More effectually to demonſtrate their good intentions, they declared themſelves ready to conſent to an immediate ceſſation of hoſtilities by ſea and land; to reſtore a free intercourſe, and to renew the common

mon benefits of naturalization throughout the ſeveral parts of the empire; to extend every freedom to trade that the reſpective intereſts of both parties could require; to agree that no military force ſhould be kept up in the different ſtates of North America, without the conſent of the General Congreſs, or of the particular aſſemblies; to concur in ſuch meaſures as would be requiſite to diſcharge the debts of America, and to raiſe the credit and value of the paper circulation; to perpetuate the common union by a reciprocal deputation of agents from the different ſtates, who ſhould have the privilege of a ſeat and voice in the Parliament of Great Britain; or if ſent from Britain, in that caſe to have a ſeat and voice in the Aſſembly of the different States to which they might be deputed reſpectively, in order to attend to the ſeveral intereſts of thoſe by whom they were deputed; to eſtabliſh the right and power of the reſpective legiſlatures in each particular ſtate, of ſettling its revenue, and its civil and military eſtabliſhment, and of exerciſing a perfect freedom of legiſlation and internal government, ſo that the Britiſh ſtates throughout North America, acting with us in peace and war, under one common ſovereign, might have the irrevocable enjoyment of every privilege that was ſhort of a total ſeparation of intereſt, or conſiſtent with that union of force on which the common ſafety of their religion and liberty depended.

After making theſe offers, they proceeded to take notice "of the inſidious interpoſition of a power, which had, from the firſt ſettlement of the Colonies, been actuated with equal enmity to them and to Britain. The aſſiſtance and alliance now proferred by France, were, it was well known, framed by that power in conſequence of the plans of accommodation previouſly concerted in Great Britain, and with a view to prevent a reconciliation, and prolong the war between them."

They

They truſted, however, "That the inhabitants of North America, connected with thoſe of Britain by the neareſt ties of conſanguinity, ſpeaking the ſame language, intereſted in the preſervation of ſimilar inſtitutions, remembering the former happy intercourſe of good offices, and forgetting recent animoſities, would ſhrink from the thought of becoming an acceſſion of force to the late common enemy of both; and would prefer a firm and free coalition with the parent ſtate, to an inſincere and unnatural foreign alliance."

They expreſſed, at the ſame time, a deſire to meet the Congreſs, either collectively, or by deputation, at Philadelphia, New York, or any other place that might be agreed upon.

When that part of the letter was read, which mentioned the infidiouſneſs of France, the reading was interrupted, and a motion made to proceed no further. The debates on this motion laſted three days; when, after much conſideration, the reading of it was reſumed, and thoſe papers alſo read that accompanied it.

They were referred to a committee, who, after a ſhort deliberation, drew up a letter in anſwer to them, which received the unanimous approbation of Congreſs.

This letter informed the commiſſioners, that "Nothing but an earneſt deſire to ſpare the effuſion of human blood, could have induced them to read a paper containing expreſſions diſreſpectful to the King of France, their great and good ally; or to conſider propoſitions ſo derogatory to the honour of an independent nation."

"The acts of the Britiſh Parliament, the commiſſion from the King of Great Britain; and the letter from the commiſſioners, ſuppoſed," it was ſaid, "the people of the United States of North America to be ſubjects of the Britiſh Crown, and were

were founded on the idea of dependence, which was utterly inadmiſſible."

"Congreſs was nevertheleſs inclined to peace, notwithſtanding the unjuſt claims from which the war originated, and ſavage manner in which it had been conducted. They would therefore be ready to enter upon the conſideration of a treaty of peace and commerce, not inconſiſtent with treaties already ſubſiſting, whenever the King of Great Britain ſhould demonſtrate a ſincere diſpoſition for that purpoſe. The only ſolid proof of ſuch a diſpoſition, would be an explicit acknowledgment of the Independence of the United States of America, or the withdrawing his fleets and armies."

This anſwer terminated the correſpondence between the Congreſs and the Commiſſioners; and put, at once, an end to all ideas of bringing about an accommodation. But ſeveral individuals exerted themſelves in the juſtification of that body, and of the American cauſe, in ſundry publications, which attracted much notice at that time.

Though Congreſs did not directly interfere in theſe matters; they were glad to ſee the abilities of their adherents employed in ſupporting their meaſures. It was the more acceptable, as the commiſſioners had, upon failure of the intended negociation with that Aſſembly, appealed to the people of the Colonies at large, and laid before them a variety of reaſonings and inducements to engage their concurrence in the terms propoſed by Great Britain for reconciliation.

At the time of the appointment of this commiſſion, an opinion was very current amongſt thoſe who ſided with miniſtry, that the majority of people in America were well effected to the cauſe of Britain. They who were in this perſuaſion, uſed their utmoſt efforts to diffuſe it; and it was in purſuance of this idea, that the commiſſioners made their

their public appeal to the inhabitants of the continent.

This conduct ſubjected the commiſſioners to ſevere reprehenſions from thoſe who took up the cauſe of Congreſs and Independence. They reproached them with endeavouring to breed diſſention and diſturbances in the Colonies, under a pretence of labouring to reſtore tranquility.

In order to counteract the allegations of the commiſſioners, it was repreſented, that the Colonies having concluded a treaty with France on the footing of a free and independent people, they would become the ſcorn and ridicule of all nations, were they without neceſſity to return to their former ſubſerviency to Great Britain. Nor would they leſs juſtly be branded with the character of a fickle faithleſs people, unworthy of truſt, and undeſerving of ſupport. They would henceforth be abandoned and deſpiſed by all Europe; and ſhould they, after ſuch an ignominious accommodation with Great Britain, again experience ill treatment, no ſtate or power would give them any countenance, were they to implore it with ever ſo many promiſes and ſolicitations. Mean while, they would lie at the mercy of Britain, whoſe reſentment would be exerted with the more readineſs, from the conviction that the Colonies would meet with no relief from any quarter. Neither was the commiſſion of ſufficient validity for the purpoſes it held out. The powers it conferred were not concluſive and final; a parliamentary ratification would be neceſſary to give efficacy to any treaty; and that treaty would be at the option of any future Parliament to reſcind, ſhould the terms appear inadequate to the pretenſions it might think proper to form, or beneath the dignity of the paramount and ruling ſtate.

Many were the publications of this nature that came forth upon this occaſion. Thoſe who principally

cipally diſtinguiſhed themſelves in the compoſition of them, were, Mr. Samuel Adams, of Boſton; and Mr. Drayton, of South Carolina; both members of Congreſs, and the author of Common Senſe.

That event, which more than any other contributed to ſet the commiſſion in a diſadvantageous light, was the evacuation of Philadelphia. Before an anſwer from Congreſs could reach the commiſſioners, General Clinton evacuated that city, after the Britiſh forces had remained in poſſeſſion of it about nine months.

This evacuation was looked upon by the Americans as the firſt deciſive ſtep to the relinquiſhment of America. They boaſted, that notwithſtanding the ſuperiority of military advantages on the ſide of the Britiſh army, it found itſelf inadequate to the taſk of a ſecond campaign in Pennſylvania, and would not venture to penetrate any more into the inland parts of the continent. They now repreſented the conceſſions made on the part of Britain, as proceeding from the conſciouſneſs of her inability to inſiſt upon her former terms. They conſidered her ſtrength as broken upon the American continent, and inferred from the Britiſh army's retreating from the principal ſcene of action, that expecting no further reinforcements to arrive, it withdrew to a place of ſecurity, in order to be at hand to quit America, in caſe the exigencies of Britain ſhould require its immediate departure.

The evacuation of Philadelphia took place on the eighteenth of June. After having made all neceſſary preparations, the army marched out of the city at three in the morning, and croſſed the Delaware before noon, with all its baggage and incumbrances, through the judicious diſpoſitions of Lord Howe to to accelerate its motions, and to ſecure its paſſage.

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A difficult paſs, at a place called Mount Holly, lay in its march. Here a ſtrong body of the enemy was poſted, to ſtop the progreſs of the Britiſh army until the arrival of the main body with General Waſhington.

Before Sir Henry Clinton had quitted Philadelphia, the American General had diſcovered his deſign, and had, in conſequence, diſpatched expreſſes into the Jerſeys, to collect all the force of the country, in order to harraſs the Britiſh troops on every ſide, and throw every obſtruction in their way.

General Maxwell, with a large detachment of American regulars, croſſed the Delaware, and joined the Jerſey militia to this intent. They broke down the bridges, and raiſed a multiplicity of impediments to retard the march of the Britiſh army; but from its ſuperiority, they did not dare to make a ſtand at Mount Holly, as they had at firſt intended.

But notwithſtanding this difficulty was overcome, a multitude of others remained. The repairing of the bridges was a work of prodigious fatigue, from the vaſt number of brooks, creeks, and watry paſſages that lay in their road, and from the exceſſive heat of the weather and climate.

In ſetting out on this dangerous retreat, the Britiſh General clearly perceived that it would be indiſpenſibly neceſſary to provide for all poſſible contingencies. His way lay entirely through an enemy's country, where every thing was hoſtile in the extreme, and from whence no aſſiſtance or help of any ſort was to be expected. The country was every where interſected with hills, woods, defiles, rivers, and difficult ſituations. The numbers of the enemy were now become formidable; ſhould they unhappily poſſeſs themſelves of ſome of the principal paſſes, it might prove a buſineſs of ſome length to force them. In this conviction, a very large quantity of proviſions had been prepared; and though a neceſ-

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ſary article, was not a little incumbrance. The baggage that accompanied the army, was immenſe. The carriages and packhorſes loaded with it, and the other neceſſaries, exended twelve miles.

From theſe various cauſes, the march of the Britiſh army was neceſſarily ſlow, and afforded the enemy time to collect a ſufficient force to render its movements very dangerous.

In the mean time General Waſhington had paſſed the Delaware, with the main body of the Continental army, and was hourly joined by the regular forces and militia that could be gathered from all parts. General Gates, at the head of the northern troops, was advancing with all ſpeed to join him.

Upon his arrival at Allan's Town, Sir Henry Clinton received intelligence, that the enemy were directing their route towards the Rariton in great force. As to attempt the paſſage of that river with ſo many incumbrances attending him, and ſo many impediments to oppoſe him, would prove an enterprize of great danger, he determined to purſue his march acroſs that part of the country which led to Sandy Hook, from whence a paſſage to New York might eaſily be effected.

Having taken this reſolution, the army ſtruck into the road leading to the Naveſink, a river that empties itſelf into the ocean, near a town called Shrewſbury, in the neighbourhood of Sandy Hook. General Waſhington, on being apprized of this motion, followed the Britiſh army with all poſſible ſpeed, in order to overtake it, before it had gained the upper country, in the line of its march, where it would be impoſſible to attack it with any proſpect of ſucceſs.

To this intent the Marquis Fayette was detached with ſome choſen troops, to harraſs the rear of the Britiſh army, and to prevent its moving with that celerity

celerity which was requiſite to reach that advantageous ground. General Lee, at the head of a large force, followed cloſe to ſupport him in caſe of need; and General Waſhington himſelf, with the main body, moved in great order and circumſpection to ſuſtain the whole.

On the twenty-ſeventh of June, Sir Henry Clinton arrived near a place called Freehold. From the great numbers of the enemy's light troops that hovered on his rear, judging that their army was approaching, he encamped on the ſtrong grounds in the neighbourhood, where it would not be eaſy for the enemy to ſurprize him.

General Waſhington, on reconnoitring his ſituation, reſolved to attack him as ſoon as he had quitted it to reſume his march. He ſpent the night in making the neceſſary preparations; his troops lay upon their arms; and he ordered General Lee to be ready with the diviſion under his command, to begin the attack at break of day.

Sir Henry Clinton foreſeeing that his march would be interrupted, determined to diſengage that part of his army which lay neareſt the enemy of all incumbrance. To this intent he aſſigned the care of the baggage to the diviſion commanded by General Knyphauſen, with orders to ſet forwards early in the morning, that it might proceed without moleſtation from the enemy.

Some hours after the departure of this diviſion, Sir Henry Clinton followed it. He had remained behind, to give it time to gain ſome diſtance, and to cover it from the enemy, whoſe attacks he juſtly ſuſpected would be directed againſt his baggage, from the difficulty of protecting it effectually, conſidering the length of ground it occupied.

Soon after he had reſumed his march, the enemies were perceived in motion on ſeveral quarters. When the rear guard of the Britiſh army had de-

ſcended from the heights, where they had encamped, into the adjacent plain, the American troops appeared immediately in great force, and took poſſeſſion of them. Large parties of them alſo deſcended into the plain, and having made the requiſite diſpoſitions for an attack, they began at ten o'clock to cannonade the rear of the Britiſh army.

In the mean time, General Waſhington had puſhed forwards ſeveral ſtrong detachments on the right and left of the Britiſh army, in order to overtake the diviſion under General Knyphauſen. It was at this time engaged in defiles that continued ſome miles, and lay, of courſe, greatly expoſed to the enemy.

In order to oblige theſe detachments to deſiſt from their intention, Sir Henry Clinton determined inſtantly to make ſo vigorous an attack upon the enemy, that had engaged his rear, as to compel them to return with the quickeſt diligence, to ſupport their own people.

The plain where the action was now begun, was three miles long, and one broad. This enabled a body of dragoons in the Britiſh army, to act to advantage. They charged a party of horſe under Marquis Fayette, and drove them back in confuſion upon their own infantry.

As all things ſeemed to tend towards a general action, a reinforcement was ordered from General Knyphauſen's diviſion; and the army was formed in order of battle on the plain. Sir Henry Clinton's intention was to make a reſolute onſet on that part of the American army that had ventured into the plain, before it could be joined by the remainder. This was yet at ſome diſtance, and had two defiles to paſs before it could come up. The whole of the American army conſiſted of more than twenty thouſand men; but no more had paſſed theſe defiles than

than what the Britiſh forces in the front line under Lord Cornwallis were able to cope with.

When the American diviſion in the plain, ſaw the Britiſh troops formed, and advancing upon them, they re-aſcended the hill, and took a ſtrong poſition towards its ſummit; but the Britiſh troops followed them with ſo much ſpeed, and attacked them ſo vigorouſly, that their firſt line was broken immediately. The ſecond ſtood with more firmneſs; but was alſo put to the rout. They both rallied, however, and poſted themſelves with a moraſs in their front. The neceſſity of obtaining deciſive ſucceſs, obliged the Britiſh General to make a third charge, upon a large body of the enemy that had taken poſſeſſion of a poſt, where, if they had been ſuffered to remain, the Britiſh army would have been greatly annoyed. This body was accordingly charged and diſperſed, and the ground cleared on all ſides for the army's motions.

The end propoſed by Sir Henry Clinton in attacking the enemy, was now completely obtained. The two detachments that in the morning paſſed on both his flanks, had, as he expected, made an attempt on the baggage; but the diviſion that guarded it, received them with ſo much firmneſs, that they could make no impreſſion; and the ſpirited attack and repulſe of that part of the American army which was oppoſed to General Clinton's diviſion, compelled them to return with all ſpeed to ſupport it.

After gaining theſe advantages, Sir Henry Clinton found it abſolutely neceſſary to give his troops ſome repoſe. The intenſe heat of the weather and ſeaſon, added to the exceſſive fatigue of the day, had proved ſo fatal, that no leſs than fifty-nine men fell dead in the ranks, without receiving a wound. He took for this purpoſe the poſition from whence the Americans had been firſt diſlodged, after their quitting the plain. Here he remained till ten at

night; at which time, in order to avoid the intolerable ſultrineſs of the climate during the day, he reſumed his march by moonlight, in order to rejoin the firſt diviſion of his army, which was now at a conſiderable diſtance, and in perfect ſecurity, by the ſucceſs of that part of the army under his own command.

Thus ended the action of the twenty-eighth of June; in which the bravery of the Britiſh troops, and their patience in enduring the moſt dreadful exceſſes of toil, were equally manifeſted. They had forced an enemy incomparably ſuperior in number, from two ſtrong poſitions. Had not General Waſhington joined them on their retreating to the ground behind the moraſs, they would probably have been diſlodged a third time. The junction of their main body prevented an intire defeat; and General Waſhington made immediately ſuch a diſpoſition, as rendered it unſafe to re-commence the attack.

It was this poſition, and the meaſures he had taken, together with the vaſt ſuperiority of his numbers, that induced the Britiſh General to move from the ground where he had reſted his troops. He continued his march leiſurely the whole of the next day, in hope that the American army might follow him. He proceeded in this manner, till he had reached the borders of the Naveſink. Here he waited two days, intending, if General Waſhington had advanced at any conſiderable diſtance from the poſt where he had left him, to have turned ſuddenly back, and attacked him.

But the American General did not think it prudent to riſk an engagement with the whole Britiſh army collected. Its retreat in preſence of the American army, was indeed conſidered as a very ſignal ſucceſs, and equal to a victory in the preſent juncture. The conduct of General Waſhington on this occaſion, gained him great applauſe. By the dili-

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gence with which he brought up the main body, he had preſerved the reſt of his army from being entirely cut off; and by his ſubſequent movements had placed it ſo advantageouſly, as to ſecure it from any attack. He had even reſolved, on the very ſuperior ſtrength of his army, to have acted offenſively, and was greatly diſappointed next morning, on finding the Britiſh troops had reſumed their march.

The behaviour of the Americans in this engagement, ſhewed they were much improved in military knowledge. After the recovery of the ſurprize they had been thrown into by the defeat of their firſt diviſion through the ſpirited and unexpected charge of the Britiſh troops, they behaved with great reſolution and ſteadineſs. Their officers, particularly, diſplayed much expertneſs and intrepidity in rallying them, after they had been twice broken.

Sir Henry Clinton, on perceiving that the enemy did not follow him, continued his march to the ſea ſide. The fleet under Lord Howe, was now arrived from the Delaware, and lay at anchor off Sandy Hook. The peninſula of this name had, during the preceding winter, through a violent ſtorm and inundation, been disjoined from the main land. By the directions of the Admiral, a bridge of boats was conſtructed with the utmoſt expediouſneſs; and on the fifth day of July the whole army paſſed over the channel into Sandy Hook iſland, from whence it was conveyed to New York.

The ſlain and wounded on the Britiſh ſide in this action, did not exceed three hundred, of whom fifty-nine died, as already mentioned, through exceſs of heat and fatigue; among thoſe who fell, Colonel Monkton was chiefly regretted. He was an officer of remarkable intrepidity. His fate was peculiar. He had been dangerouſly wounded in

various engagements, and once had been left for dead in the field. The loſs of the enemy was reputed much more conſiderable.

General Waſhington, after detaching ſome light troops to follow the Britiſh army, and obſerve its motions, directed his march towards the North River, where a great force had been collected in order to join him, and where, it was now expected, that ſome operations of importance would ſhortly take place.

The action at Freehold occaſioned a violent breach between General Waſhington and General Lee. This latter was charged with diſobedience and miſconduct, in retreating from before the Britiſh diviſion, which he had attacked in the morning on the plain. A court martial was held upon him, and he was ſentenced to a temporary ſuſpenſion from his command.

In the mean time, the ſquadron under Count D'Eſtaing, which had left Toulon on the fourteenth of April, croſſed the Straits of Gibraltar the fifteenth of May, and arrived on the coaſt of Virginia in the beginning of July, while the Britiſh fleet was employed in conveying the army over to Sandy Hook iſland, and from thence to New York.

Had the French ſquadron ſteered for the mouth of the Delaware, or Sandy Hook, the deſtruction of both the Britiſh fleet and army would have been inevitable. The fleet was in no condition for reſiſtance, conſiſting only of the tranſports, with two ſhips of the line, and a few frigates. The army would then have been incloſed by the Americans at land, and the French at ſea. Hemmed in by mountains, and an impaſſable tract of country, it would have found it impoſſible to force its way to New York. Deſtitute of proviſions, and cut off from all communication, it muſt undoubtedly have been compelled at laſt to ſurrender. Had this proved

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the caſe, the fate of the war would have been completely decided; and Britain would have received ſuch a blow, as ſhe has not felt for a long courſe of ages, and might not for a length of years have recovered.

Notwithſtanding this ſignal eſcape from ſo great a diſaſter, dangers of every kind yet remained to be encountered. On the eleventh of July the French ſquadron came in ſight of the Britiſh fleet off Sandy Hook. It conſiſted of one ſhip of ninety guns, one of eighty, ſix of ſeventy-four, and four of ſixty-four, beſides ſeveral large frigates. Excluſive of its complement of ſeamen, it had ſix thouſand marines and ſoldiers on board.

To oppoſe this formidable ſquadron, there were at preſent at New York, no more than ſix ſhips of ſixty-four guns, three of fifty, and two of forty, with ſome frigates and ſloops. They were not in good condition, having long been abſent from England, and their crews were very deficient in number. They had, however, a material ſuperiority over the enemy, in that of their commander and his officers.

The Britiſh fleet was happily ſo ſtationed, as to command the entrance of the harbour of Sandy Hook, which is covered by a bar, and affords but a narrow inlet. The intention of the French Admiral, was to force his way through: but when he drew near the Britiſh ſquadron, and had obſerved its poſition, and apparent determination to ſtand his utmoſt efforts, notwithſtanding its manifeſt inferiority in every reſpect, the conſciouſneſs of the great capacity and courage of its commander, the ſight of the diſpoſitions he had made, the knowledge of the deſperate exertions of valour he would have to encounter, and the uncertainty whether the paſſage through the gut was practicable for ſhips of the ſize of thoſe that compoſed his ſquadron; all theſe

motives engaged him to decline a trial, which, if unſucceſsful, might endanger the ſafety of his ſquadron, and bring diſgrace and ruin upon the arms of France, on their very firſt outſet.

Never did the intrepidity of the Britiſh nation diſplay itſelf with more luſtre than upon this memorable occaſion. The people belonging to the fleet of tranſports, and merchantmen, lying at New York, vied with each other who ſhould be foremoſt in his offers of ſervice. A thouſand of the beſt and ſtouteſt ſeamen were ſelected to do duty on board the men of war. Thoſe to whom they had been preferred, inſiſted upon accompanying them; and numbers, in ſpite of all endeavours to reſtrain them, found means to join their companions. The maſters and ſeamen of the trading veſſels, acted with equal zeal and readineſs; and there was no ſpecies of ſervice, which was not courted as a favour by individuals of all claſſes and denominations. One ſeafaring man particularly, offered to convert his veſſel into a fireſhip, without pay or reward, and to conduct her himſelf into the midſt of the enemy.

The courage of the officers and ſoldiers of the army was not leſs conſpicuous. Wounds, and the conſequences of the extreme fatigue and hardſhips they had recently undergone, were forgotten. The ſtrife was univerſal, who ſhould repair on board the men of war to ſerve as marines: the conteſt was ſo eager, that no other method could be contrived to decide it, than by caſting lots among the common men, as well as among the officers.

When the extraordinary ſpirit exerted upon this memorable emergency is taken into due conſideration, the arrival of the French ſquadron on the coaſt of North America at this juncture, may be accounted one of the moſt fortunate circumſtances of the war. It gave the Britiſh nation one of the moſt illuſtrious opportunities that it has had for ages, of ſignaliz-

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ing that intrepid character for which it has at all times been renowned. The greatneſs of the danger was ſuch, that it was an act of high courage even in a brave nation, to face it with that coolneſs and deliberation which was ſo unanimouſly exhibited. It ſhewed what great reſources true valour can find, and how difficult it is to overcome men who are determined to leave nothing undone for their defence.

While theſe meaſures were carrying on at New York, the French ſquadron lay at anchor about four miles off Sandy Hook. Here it continued about a fortnight, in expectation of meeting with ſome opportunity of being more ſerviceable to the common cauſe of France and America, than it had hitherto been able to prove. But it did no more than capture ſome veſſels, which fell into its poſſeſſion from their ignorance of a Freneh fleet being in thoſe ſeas.

The hopes of relief at New York, were founded on the expectation of ſeeing the arrival of Admiral Byron's ſquadron, conſiſting of eleven ſail of ſeventy-four guns, and one of ninety. It had left Portſmouth on the twentieth of May; but the miniſtry not being fully apprized of Count D'Eſtaing's deſtination, diſpatched an expreſs to recall it to Plymouth; from whence it did not ſail till the ninth of June, after advice had been received of the French ſquadron's ſteering for North America.

The voyage of this ſquadron was extremely unfortunate. It met with a continuity of bad weather, and was ſo ſhattered by ſtorms, as to be diſabled for action. It arrived, after a tedious paſſage, ſcattered and detached on different parts of the coaſt of America.

On the twenty-ſecond of July, the French fleet under Count D'Eſtaing, got under way. The wind blowing from the ſea, the water roſe thirty feet on the

bar, and no doubt was made at New York of the French Admiral's ſeizing ſo favourable an opportunity of trying the paſſage into the harbour. Every preparation was made to receive him, and all people waited with anxiety for an event by which ſo much would have been decided: but contrary to expectation, he did not think it adviſeable to make the attempt; and without approaching to reconnoitre any further, he directly ſtood off to ſea.

This departure of the French fleet, was a ſecond deliverance of the higheſt conſequence to the affairs of Great Britain in that quarter. In the ſpace of the following week two ſhips of fifty guns, one of ſixty-four, and another of ſeventy-four, ſucceſſively arrived at Sandy Hook, all which muſt have unavoidably fallen into the enemy's hands, had he remained on that ſtation.

Thus, fortunately for this country, was that plan entirely fruſtrated on which the Court of France had placed ſo much dependence. The capture of the whole Britiſh fleet in the Delaware, and the conſequent loſs of the army, was looked upon at Paris as next to a certainty. Doubtleſs the meaſures were ſo well concerted, that ſuch an event was highly probable, and it was owing merely to accidents that it did not take place in the fulleſt extent it had been expected.

After failing in the principal intent of his expedition, it now behoved the French Admiral to exert himſelf, in order to make amends for the little ſucceſs that had hitherto attended him. The object at which he now propoſed to direct his operations was Rhode Iſland. While he lay at Sandy Hook, an attack was projected upon that place between him and the Congreſs, and it was in execution of that intent he departed ſo unexpectedly.

As he had a body of ſix thouſand marines and ſoldiers on board, it was propoſed that he ſhould make

make a deſcent with them on the ſouthern extremity of that iſland, while a body of the Americans made another towards the north. The ſquadron meanwhile, was to enter the harbour of Newport, deſtroy the ſhipping there, and aſſault the works and batteries along the ſhore.

On the twenty-ninth of July, the French ſquadron anchored without the bar, fronting Newport, and blocked up the paſſage between the ſeveral iſles that lie around Rhode Iſland, the principal one. Sir Robert Pigot, who commanded the Britiſh troops there, had made every requiſite preparation for a brave defence. The ſeveral veſſels that were neceſſarily deſtroyed, to prevent their being taken by the enemy, furniſhed him with an excellent ſupply of men for the ſervice of the artillery, and the veſſels themſelves were ſunk in thoſe inlets and channels which would have afforded the enemy a convenient ſtation for attacking the works.

The charge of attacking Rhode Iſland on the ſide of the continent, was committed to General Sullivan, an officer whoſe conduct ſince the beginning of the war had obtained him great reputation. The troops were chiefly compoſed of people from the New England Provinces.

On the eighth of Auguſt the French ſquadron entered the harbour of Newport, and coaſting the town, diſcharged their broadſides into it, and received the fire of the batteries on ſhore; but little execution was done on either ſide. They anchored a little way above the town, in order to be ready to co-operate with the New England forces, which were preparing to land on the north ſide of the iſland.

In the mean time, Lord Howe, on receiving intelligence of the attack upon Rhode Iſland, reſolved to make the utmoſt efforts he was able for its preſervation. His naval force now conſiſted of one ſeventy-

ſeventy-four, ſeven ſixty-four, and five fifty gun ſhips. The great ſuperiority of the French in weight of metal, rendered any attempt againſt them very hazardous, but the preſſingneſs of the occaſion, together with his intrepidity, determined him to undertake it.

At the head of this ſquadron he ſailed from New York; but from contrary winds, could not reach Rhode Iſland till the ninth of Auguſt, the day after the French ſquadron had entered the harbour of Newport.

On the appearance of the Britiſh fleet, the French Admiral reſolved immediately to ſail out of the harbour and attack it. To this purpoſe the wind proving fair the next morning, the tenth of Auguſt, he put to ſea. Having the weather-gage, and Lord Howe being unwilling to leave him in poſſeſſion of that advantage, a conteſt enſued for it, which laſted the whole day; the French Admiral, notwithſtanding his ſuperiority, ſtriving for it with no leſs eagerneſs. The wind ſtill continuing unfavourable, on the eleventh, the Britiſh Admiral finding it impracticable to gain the weather-gage, reſolved forthwith to attack the enemy, without contending for it any longer. Having formed his ſquadron with that great profeſſional ſkill and judgment which was ſo much applauded on this occaſion, he bravely prepared to engage. But the wind, which already blew with conſiderable force, increaſed ſuddenly to ſuch a degree, as entirely to fruſtrate his deſign. It gradually augmented to a violent ſtorm, which laſted two days and nights. It ſeparated both fleets, and did them ſo much damage, that moſt of the ſhips were rendered totally unfit for action.

The violence of this tempeſt fell chiefly upon the French ſquadron. Several of its ſhips were diſmaſted. The Languedoc, of ninety guns, the Admiral's ſhip, had none ſtanding, when ſhe was met

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in that condition by the Renown of fifty guns, commanded by Captain Dawſon. He attacked her immediately with ſo much courage and dexterity, that had not darkneſs interpoſed, together with the gale, which had not yet ſufficiently abated, no doubt was entertained ſhe muſt have ſtruck: her rudder was ſhot away, and ſhe had ſuffered other eſſential damage. Captain Dawſon lay cloſely to her during the night, purpoſing to renew the attack by break of day; but as ſoon as it returned, he diſcovered ſix French ſhips of the line bearing down upon him, which neceſſarily obliged him to retire.

The very ſame day, Commodore Hotham, in the Preſton, alſo of fifty guns, fell in with the Tonant, an eighty gun ſhip, with only her mainmaſt remaining. He attacked her, but was compelled by the coming on of night, to diſcontinue the engagement till next morning, when the appearance of ſeveral French ſhips obliged him to withdraw.

But the engagement that happened between the Iſis of fifty guns, and a French ſhip of ſeventy-four, was perhaps the moſt remarkable action that took place during the war. Neither of them had ſuffered through the ſtorm; but notwithſtanding the prodigious inequality between them, the Iſis maintained ſo reſolute a fight, that after a cloſe engagement within piſtol-ſhot, that laſted an hour and a half, the French ſhip was obliged to put before the wind, and croud away with a preſs of ſail. The commander of the Iſis was Captain Raynor, whoſe heroic bravery in this brilliant action, did both him and his country the higheſt honour, and was acknowledged by the French themſelves, with unfeigned aſtoniſhment and admiration.

The French ſquadron returned to Rhode Iſland on the twentieth of Auguſt in ſuch a ſhattered condition,

dition, that dreading an attack from Lord Howe, they did not think it ſafe to remain there. They ſailed on the twenty-ſecond for Boſton, in order to repair their ſhips in a place of ſecurity.

The Britiſh ſquadron had ſuffered much leſs in the ſtorm than the French. It was obliged, however to make ſome ſtay at New York for the purpoſe of refitting. As ſoon as this was effected, Lord Howe ſailed immediately in queſt of the French fleet; but he found it in Boſton harbour. Reſolving however to attack it, if it were practicable, he carefully reconnoitred its ſituation; but it was ſo powerfully protected by batteries and defences raiſed on every ſide, that any attempt was judged entirely uſeleſs.

While Count D'Eſtaing was ſailing out of Newport harbour to attack the Britiſh fleet under Lord Howe, General Sullivan landed on the northern point of Rhode Iſland. The force he had with him conſiſted of about ten thouſand men. On the ſeventeenth of Auguſt, they begun their operations by erecting batteries, and making their approaches to the Britiſh lines. General Pigot was no leſs attentive in taking every meaſure to fruſtrate their exertions. His garriſon was ſufficiently numerous, and in excellent order and ſpirits; and the ſituation of the place, together with the works that had been conſtructed for its defence, rendered it very capable of making an effectual reſiſtance.

The ſouthern part of Rhode Iſland, where the town of Newport ſtands, is divided from the northern by a narrow ridge of land, which forms a kind of iſthmus. Along this ridge, which ſtretches from the eaſtern to the weſtern ſhore, the Britiſh troops had formed lines and redoubts that entirely ſecured the ſouthern diviſion of the iſland from any apprehenſion of an enemy that could only carry on his attacks by land.

Had

Had Count D'Eſtaing, as it had been propoſed, co-operated with General Sullivan, and landed a body of men on the ſouthern ſhore, while he was making a diverſion on the north, the poſition of General Pigot would have been extremely critical. The Americans complained bitterly of his conduct upon this occaſion. He was at the time when Lord Howe arrived with his ſquadron, completely maſter of the harbour; the Britiſh ſhipping there had been either ſunk or burnt, to prevent their being captured by the enemy. It would have been impracticable for the Britiſh ſquadron to force a paſſage into the harbour againſt ſo great a ſuperiority. Every advantage was manifeſtly on his ſide, and the ſucceſs of the enterprize ſeemed clearly within his reach. His motive for relinquiſhing it, was the uncertain honour of defeating the Britiſh fleet. But it would have been time enough to have encountered Lord Howe after having obliged General Pigot to ſurrender Rhode Iſland. Such were the ideas of the Americans on this occaſion,

The conduct of Count D'Eſtaing gave ſuch offence to the people of New England that were with General Sullivan, that they abandoned the enterprize, and returned home highly diſguſted at their diſappointment. This deſertion reduced him to an inferiority in point of number to the garriſon he was beſieging; and compelled him to think ſeriouſly of making a retreat.

He broke up his encampment accordingly on the twenty-ſixth of Auguſt. But on perceiving his intentions, the garriſon ſallied out upon him, and aſſailed him with ſo much vigour, that he was conſtrained to make ſeveral reſolute ſtands before he could bring off his troops. With much difficulty he made good his retreat to ſome advantageous ground on the north of the iſland, where he poſted himſelf ſo ſecurely as to remain out of all danger.

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He then paſſed his troops over to the continent, and put an end to an expedition, which, though it procured him great perſonal honour, was attended with much fruitleſs trouble and danger, and brought Count D'Eſtaing and his countrymen into much diſreputation.

It was fortunate for General Sullivan to have effected his retreat in this manner. Immediately on his departure, Sir Henry Clinton arrived in Rhode Iſland with a body of four thouſand men. Such a reinforcement to the garriſon, would have enabled him to obtain the completeſt ſucceſs over that officer: his retreat would have been cut off, and the town of Providence deſtroyed, a place of which the neighbourhood occaſioned perpetual alarms at Rhode Iſland, from the armaments and enterprizes that were continually projected and carried on from that quarter.

This was the deſign intended by Sir Henry Clinton, and which he would, in all probability, have executed, had not contrary winds delayed his arrival. It was however no ſmall ſucceſs to the Britiſh arms at this critical juncture to have defeated the attempts of the Americans by land, and thoſe of the French at ſea, notwithſtanding their immenſe ſuperiority, and the vaſt expectations it had created all over the continent.

No commander had ever ſet forth with greater views, and with greater proſpects of fulfilling them; and perhaps none was ever more completely diſappointed. In France it was thought, that if he were not able to ſurprize the Britiſh fleet and army, ſtill he would unqueſtionably have it in his power to diſtreſs the former in ſuch a manner, as would diſable and diſpirit the latter ſo effectually, as to put an end to all its operations, and open ſuch a field of action to the Americans, as to render them totally maſters of the field every where, and at liberty

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to proſecute what meaſures they pleaſed without interruption.

Such were the hopes with which Count D'Eſtaing quitted France; nor did he, when he firſt arrived on the coaſt of America, find any motive to alter them. Though the prime object of his deſtination had not been anſwered, which was to come unawares on the Britiſh fleet and army, yet his ſtrength was ſuch, that in all appearance, no naval force that could be brought againſt him would be able to withſtand it.

Elate with this proſpect, he confidently entered the ſcene of action; but he met with an adverſary who ſtopped his progreſs in the very outſet, and convinced him, that if he met with ſucceſs, it muſt be purchaſed at the deareſt rate. He beheld an enemy, whom at firſt, he thought unable to defend himſelf, acquiring gradually, through dint of ſuperior abilities, and indefatigable exertions, the power of acting on the offenſive. Inferior in ſize of ſhips, in weight of metal, in number of men, this enemy boldly came forth to encounter him in the open ſea, truſting ſolely to his courage and capacity for the iſſue of ſo unequal a conteſt. Inſtead of a broken and diſheartened foe, flying before him, and glad to abſcond wherever a ſhelter could be found, he ſaw himſelf, through the diligence, the ſagacity, and the daringneſs of his rival's motions, under a neceſſity of avoiding him, for his own preſervation. After being ſucceſſively diſappointed and defeated in every attempt he had formed, to complete his mortification, he was compelled to ſeek refuge among thoſe whom he had been ſent to aſſiſt, in order to eſcape the purſuit of this active and reſolute foe.

Thus terminated the projects that were to have been executed by Count D'Eſtaing; who, though a brave and experienced officer, was certainly very unable to enter the field of competition

with ſo great a naval commander as Lord Howe.—Inſtead of viewing the banners of France flying triumphantly at New York, as had been expected, the Americans were obliged to protect them in the road of Boſton, where the French ſquadron now remained, utterly incapable of ſervice.

Unfortunate accidents doubtleſs contributed to the diſaſters of the French; but theſe accidents were in a great meaſure occaſioned by the movements as they were certainly improved to the utmoſt, by the vigilance and dexterity of the Britiſh Admiral. It was admitted by good judges, that it was through the ability of the rival he had to face, much more than through any other cauſe, the deſigns and meaſures of the French commander were ſo unproſperous throughout the whole campaign.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Military Operations in North America,

1778.

AFTER the retreat of the French ſquadron under Count D'Eſtaing into Boſton, the apprehenſions ariſing from it being ſubſided, it was determined at New York to improve this opportunity of its inability to act, by attacking ſome of thoſe harbours whence the Americans committed ſuch depredations on the Britiſh ſhipping.

A fleet of tranſports, with a body of troops on board, under the command of General Grey, and a convoy of ſome frigates, under Captain Fanſhawe, ſailed to Buzzard's Bay, on the coaſt of New England, in the neighbourhood of Rhode Iſland. This bay was full of creeks and inlets, where ſmall privateers, from the ſhallowneſs of the water, could always eſcape the purſuit of large veſſels. For that reaſon they took their ſtation near them, and were continually on the look-out for veſſels ſailing that way to Long Iſland and New York.

The troops were landed on the fifth of September, on both ſides of the river, on which the towns of Bedford and Fairhaven are ſituated. Here they deſtroyed a great number of magazines and ſtore-houſes, with about ſeventy ſail of privateers and merchantmen. The loſs was the greater, as theſe latter had their cargoes on board, and were on the point of ſailing.

From hence they proceeded to Martha's Vineyard, an iſland fertile and populous, where they collected about ten thouſand ſheep, and three hundred head of cattle. Both theſe expeditions, though not brilliant, were of eſſential utility in protecting

trade of New York, and furniſhing a conſiderable ſupply to the forces there.

In conſequence of the hoſtilities committed by the French in the American ſeas, it was now reſolved to diſpoſſeſs them of the two iſlands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, which had by the laſt treaty of peace been left to them, to cure and dry their fiſh, and afford other neceſſaries and conveniencies to their ſhipping employed in the fiſhery on the banks of Newfoundland. As theſe iſlands were in no ſtate of defence, they were eaſily reduced. The inhabitants and garriſon, in number altogether about three thouſand, were tranſported to France, and the ſettlement entirely deſtroyed. This happened about the middle of September.

In the mean time an expedition took place from New York up the North River. Lord Cornwallis proceeded on the weſtern, and General Knyphauſen on the eaſtern ſide, and the river itſelf was occupied by armed veſſels and flat-boats, for the communication and paſſage of the troops from the one ſide to the other, in caſe their co-operation ſhould be needed.

General Waſhington's army was ſtationed in the ſame manner; but from his inferiority in ſhipping, it was with much difficulty the divided parts of it could be drawn together. He was at this time encamped in a ſtrong poſition on the eaſtern ſide of the North River; but the Britiſh forces were ſo advantageouſly poſted, that he did not think proper to make any movements to interrupt their operations in the Jerſeys: ſuch an attempt would have compelled him to riſk a general engagement, which it was his conſtant ſtudy to avoid.

The principal event during this expedition was the deſtruction of a regiment of American cavalry, known by the name of Mrs. Waſhington's Light Horſe. It was commanded by Colonel Baylor, a gentleman

gentleman of rank and intereſt in Virginia, where it had been raiſed. It had been detached, with a body of militia, to interrupt the foraging parties belonging to the diviſion of the Britiſh army under Lord Cornwallis. On receiving intelligence of the facility of ſurprizing them, from their unguarded ſituation, he ordered General Grey to advance on one ſide, while Colonel Campbell, with a detachment from the corps under General Knyphauſen, croſſed the North River, and came upon them from another.

The whole body of militia and light horſe would have been completely ſurprized, had not ſome deſerters from the Britiſh troops informed them of their danger. The militia had time to eſcape; but Sept. 28, 1778. General Grey puſhed forwards with ſuch expedition, that he came unawares upon the light-horſemen. They were ſurrounded in the village where they lay, and moſt of them were either killed or taken. Great complaints were made on this occaſion by the Americans; they repreſented the behaviour of the Britiſh troops as inhuman, and contrary to the laws of war obſerved among civilized nations. They accuſed them of having maſſacred in cold blood men who made no reſiſtance, and begged for quarter.

The ſucceſs that had attended the expedition to Bedford and Fairhaven, ſuggeſted another to Little Egg Harbour, on the coaſt of New Jerſey, from the very ſame motives. It was a place noted for privateers, that did much miſchief along that ſhore, and were as troubleſome on the ſouth, as the others had been on the north ſide of New York.—Captain Ferguſon, with a ſelect party, embarked under the convoy of Captain Collins, with ſome frigates and gallies. The enemy being apprized of their coming, ſent out as many of their veſſels and privateers to ſea as could be got ready, in order to

avoid capture, and hauled the remainder into the river Mullicus, as far up the country as it was practicable.

The enemy relied for protection on the difficulty of paſſing through the many bars and ſhoals that obſtructed the river, and were totally unknown to the Britiſh troops and ſeamen. But the labour and perſeverance of theſe ſurmounted all obſtacles; they made their way to the place where the ſhipping had been conveyed, which was at twenty miles diſtance from the ſea. The enemy, to intimidate them, had thrown up the appearance of batteries and breaſt-works on the water-ſide, well manned with the country militia, who ſeemed prepared to make a reſolute defence: but they were ſoon compelled to retire by the artillery that had been brought up in the gun-boats, and the troops landing, completely diſperſed them.

A number of veſſels were found at this place, moſtly Britiſh prizes, ſome of conſiderable value.—But as from various cauſes, the bringing them off would have conſumed much time, and expoſed the detachment to much danger, they were all deſtroyed, together with the ſettlement itſelf, in order to prevent its becoming again a receptacle for privateers.

Being informed that part of a celebrated military corps among the Americans, known by the name of Pulaſki's Legion, was cantoned at a few miles diſtance, they undertook to ſurprize them, and did it ſo effectually, as to put a great number to the ſword, and to retire without loſs to their ſhipping. The enemy having collected ſome reinforcements, endeavoured to cut off their retreat; but having previouſly ſecured a bridge and a defile, they maintained their ground ſucceſsfully, and compelled the enemy to withdraw. This tranſaction took place in the beginning of October.

On this occaſion, as well as that of the ſurpriſal of Baylor's light horſe, the Britiſh troops were charged with having barbarouſly refuſed quarter to the Americans. The anſwer to this charge was, that both theſe atacks were made in the night, when little order or diſcipline could be obſerved, and that unhappily the Britiſh troops were under a perſuaſion that no quarter was intended to be given them.

But whatever irregularities might have happened upon theſe occaſions, they were nothing to thoſe that were committed in the back ſettlements, in the courſe of the military operations that were carried on in thoſe parts, during the preſent campaign.

At the time when General Gates commanded the American army at Saratoga, the Indians in thoſe quarters ſent him deputies with their public congratulations on his ſucceſs, and aſſurances of their friendly wiſhes to the cauſe he ſupported. But on the cloſe of that campaign, when the American forces were withdrawn from that neighbourhood, the Britiſh agents began again to be active among the Indian tribes: they diſtributed conſiderable preſents to their chiefs, and neglected nothing to raiſe a powerful party among the moſt warlike and enterprizing of theſe ferocious people.

In this they were zealouſly aſſiſted by thoſe numbers of refugees, who had fled from the Colonies, and were meditating plans of revenge againſt the adverſe party. Excited by their own aviditity, and by the perſuaſions and influence of the agents and refugees, the Indians began by committing depredations on the people in the back ſettlements, in ſmall bodies, that were led on by the refugees, who beſt knew how to conduct them where moſt ſpoil was to be had. As their incurſions were very ſucceſsful, they proved an incitement to others: they became gradually more frequent, and were carried

on by larger numbers: the situation of the inhabitants on the frontiers of the northern, and middle Colonies, became thereby exceedingly wretched and deplorable.

Two men principally signalized themselves in these destructive expeditions. The one was Colonel Butler, a native of Connecticut, who acted in the capacity of an Agent, and a Chief among the Indians, over whom he had acquired and exercised great authority. The name of the other was Brandt. His father was of German origin, and his mother an Indian:—He was a man of uncommon resolution; but of a fierce and cruel disposition. Under these two commanders the Indians and Refugees committed the most dreadful devastations and barrities.

What rendered the condition of the Colonists who adhered to Congress the more calamitous, was, that many of those who dwelt among them, favoured their enemies, and gave them intelligence of all that passed. This enabled them to take their measures in so appositè a manner, as always to be sure of success.

Along the eastern branch of the Susquehanna, lies a pleasant and fertile country. It had been claimed as part of Pennsylvania; but the Colony of Connecticut, relying upon the authority of an ancient charter, had, since the last war, made a large settlement on the banks of that beautiful river. The name of it was Wioming; it consisted of eight townships, five square miles each.

The Pennsylvanians, after protesting against this proceeding, as an encroachment upon their territories, and finding that remonstances had no effect on the people of Connecticut, resolved to have recourse to violence, and to expel the new settlers from the lands of which they considered them as the usurpers; they had accordingly used force, and the others

others had repelled it. Notwithſtanding the diſſention between Great Britain and America, this inteſtine quarrel ſtill continued, till the preceeding became ſo ſerious, that the latter was ſuſpended by mutual conſent.

This ſettlement, in the mean time, became ſo flouriſhing and populous, that it ſent a thouſand men as its proportion to the Continental army, beſides adequate ſupplies of proviſions. They had been no leſs careful of their internal defence againſt the irruptions that might be apprehended from the Indians: they had erected four ſufficiently ſtrong forts, in order to guard againſt any dangers of that kind. The zeal of the party that ſided with Congreſs, had, however, much outgone its diſcretion, in ſending ſuch a number of men out of a ſettlement where they were ſo much wanted: thoſe who oppoſed Congreſs, formed a numerous and active party, and were now determined to avail themſelves of the abſence of ſo conſiderable a number of their enemies.

During the preceding campaign, ſeveral inroads were made upon them by the Indians, accompanied with ſome Refugees; and it was not without much trouble and bloodſhed they were driven off; but the enmity of theſe Indians was now become much more dangerous, from the numbers of their own people who had abandoned the ſettlement, in conſequence of inteſtine diviſions, and the treatment they received from the ruling party. As they went off with a full determination of wreaking their vengeance, they were induſtrious in ſeeking the means of effecting it.

In order to ſecure themſelves from the machinations of their adverſaries, the ruling party had compelled a number of ſtrangers lately come into the ſettlement to depart, on ſuſpicion of their harbouring hoſtile intentions. Some of them they had ſeized,

ed, and ſent to Connecticut, to be capitally proſecuted. This tranſaction kindled new rage in their opponents, and added freſh activity to the ſchemes they were forming.

To deceive the people in the ſettlement into ſecurity, and to put them off their guard, the Indians affected uncommon demonſtrations of friendſhip, and of a ſincere deſire to be thoroughly reconciled and to preſerve the peace. To this intent they ſent a few of the moſt artful and dexterous, who were, under pretence of being charged with their amicable aſſurances, to obſerve the circumſtances and poſture of the ſettlement, and bring all the intelligence they could collect.

After having, ſome time previous to the execution of their deſigns, carried on this deception, the Refugees and Indians collected all their force in the beginning of July; it conſiſted of thirteen hundred Refugees, and about thee hundred Indians. The former had painted and clad themſelves like the latter, with a view either to concealment, or to aſſume a more intimidating appearance.

They began their operations by inveſting one of the forts; which, it was ſaid, being chiefly garriſoned by their ſecret partiſans, was betrayed into their hands. They took another by ſtorm, where they gave quarter only to the women and children. They next ſummoned the principal fort, called Kingſton, to ſurrender, threatening, in caſe of refuſal, to give no quarter. The commanding officer, who was a near relation of the Refugee commander, and bore alſo the name of Butler, propoſed a parley, in hope of coming to ſome accommodation: his propoſal was accepted, and a place of meeting appointed. Not thinking it prudent, however, to truſt himſelf into their hands, he went accompanied by four hundred men well armed.

On

On his arrival at the place of appointment, no perſon was preſent: he ſtill advanced, in expectation of being met; when looking round, he perceived at the foot of a mountain, at ſome diſtance from him, a flag, which, as he approached, withdrew, as if thoſe who were with it, miſtruſted him. But as he drew near to it, he ſuddenly found himſelf ſurrounded and attacked on all ſides, by four times his numbers. He defended himſelf near an hour, with ſo much bravery, that they ſeemed to be giving way: when unexpectedly one of his men, either through fear or treachery, cried out that he had ordered a retreat. This inſtantly threw his party into confuſion; they were broken every where, and ſlaughtered without mercy. Himſelf, with about ſeventy, eſcaped to a ſmall fort.

On this ſucceſs, the enemy marched to fort Kingſton, into which, to ſhew the garriſon the proofs of their victory, and the inutility of making any defence, they ſent in the ſcalps of thoſe they had ſlain, amounting to about two hundred.

The officer who commanded, willing, in this terrible extremity, to make the beſt terms he could for his remaining garriſon, and the other people in the fort, ventured out with a flag, and waited on Colonel Butler, to know what terms he would grant on a ſurrender. His reply was, the hatchet. With this barbarous and dreadful anſwer, the officer returned to his garriſon; who, knowing what they were to expect, had no other proſpect left than to ſell their lives as dearly as poſſible: they defended themſelves accordingly, until they were nearly all, either killed or wounded; the reſt, unable to continue the defence, were forced to ſurrender at diſcretion.

The enemy carried off ſome of the priſoners: the reſt they ſhut up in the houſes, which being ſet on fire, they periſhed in the flames. They acted with the ſame barbarity on taking the laſt fort, which

which ſurrendered in a few minutes, without any ſtipulations: they maſſacred, with remarkable inſtances of inhumanity, about ſeventy of the militia, and ſhutting up the others, with the women and children in the buildings of the fort, they committed them to the flames.

After the perpetration of theſe cruelties, they proceeded to deſtroy all the houſes, farms, and ſettlements that came within their reach; ſuch only excepted, as belonged to thoſe of their own party. This deſtruction was extended to the crops on the ground, and to every production of the earth: they killed and maimed the cattle; in ſhort, they left nothing undeſtroyed that could be of any uſe. Thus was this flouriſhing colony rendered in a few days a ſcene of univerſal deſolation.

To theſe enormities, they added others ſtill more horrible:—They burned alive three officers, their priſoners, with circumſtances of refined barbarity. Such was the exceſs of party rage, that even the moſt powerful and endearing ties of nature were trampled upon. One of the Refugees murdered his father-in-law, his own ſiſters, and their children, and even his own mother. Another, who had often threatened the life of his father, now executed this horrid reſolution: with his own hand he butchered his father, mother, brothers, and ſiſters; ſtripped off their ſcalps, and cut off his father's head.

Such were the accounts publiſhed by the Americans of the deſtruction of the flouriſhing Colony of Wioming, by thoſe of their countrymen who accompanied Colonel Butler in this bloody expedition. Unhappily they have not been contradicted. However ſhocking to relate, ſuch horrors ought not to paſs unnoticed. They ſerve to admoniſh mankind, to what exceſſes of iniquity human nature, even in civilized ſociety, may be impelled by the animoſities ariſing from civil feuds, and warn them to beware of harbouring ſuch reſentments

ments againſt thoſe who differ from them in opinion, as may tend to obliterate the remembrance of the reciprocal obligation men are under of obſerving, in the worſt of times, the laws of honour and generosity.

The fate of this unhappy Colony made the deeper impreſſion on the minds of the Americans, as they were not at the preſent time in a condition to inflict that vengeance upon its authors, which their crimes ſo juſtly deſerved. It was, however, univerſally determined, that they ſhould be ſeverely puniſhed at a convenient ſeaſon.

In order, at the ſame time, to obviate a repetition of ſuch horrors, in the back ſettlements of the middle and ſouthern Colonies, as had juſt been experienced on the frontiers of Pennſylvania, an expedition was ſet on foot, the intent of which was to extirpate the primary cauſe of theſe ſanguinary executions.

On the banks of the Upper Miſſiſſippi, in a pleaſant and fertile country, inhabited by an Indian nation called the Ilinois, the French from Canada were in poſſeſſion of ſeveral thriving plantations and ſettlements, which, by their ſituation, enabled them to acquire and exerciſe great influence among the many Indian tribes in the neighbouring parts.

This French ſettlement was under the direction of a man, who had rendered himſelf peculiarly remarkable by the warmth and inveteracy with which he had acted againſt the Colonies ſince the commencement of hoſtilities. Being an agent for government among the Indians, he neglected nothing to excite them to exert themſelves to the utmoſt againſt the Coloniſts. Among other inducements, he was noted for the liberality with which he rewarded thoſe who brought in ſcalps. The depredations committed by the Indians, upon the inhabitants of the back ſettlements of the middle and ſouthern Colonies,

lonies, were chiefly attributed to his inſtigations. He was now projecting an invaſion of theſe ſettlements by the Indians ſituated on the Ohio and the Miſſiſſippi.

The perſon choſen to conduct an expedition againſt this French ſettlement, was Colonel Clarke, a brave and prudent officer. It lay at a great diſtance, no leſs than twelve hundred miles, moſt of which was wild and uncultivated. He ſet out at the head of three hundred choſen men, and ſailing down the Ohio, along that immenſe extent of country, through which this celebrated river winds its courſe, he arrived without meeting any obſtruction, at the great cataract which interrupts its navigation into the Miſſiſſippi. Here his party landed, and directed its march northward. After a long march through a deſert country, their proviſions were at laſt entirely conſumed, and they endured two days hard fatigue without taking any ſuſtenance.

They were, however, by this time, in the precincts of the ſettlement, which was the object of their expedition. Hunger added to their reſolution, and they determined to ſucceed, or periſh in the attempt. The name of the principal place in this remote ſettlement, was Kaſkakias: it conſiſted of between two and three hundred houſes. Here the Governor and principal people reſided, and it was in a good ſtate of defence.

The intention of Colonel Clarke, was, therefore, to come upon it by ſurprize. He lay concealed in a neighbouring foreſt during the day; and at midnight he diſtributed his party into ſeveral ſmall diviſions, which entered the town while the inhabitants were all at reſt in their houſes: they took poſſeſſion of the fort in the ſame manner. The ſuddenneſs of the ſurpriſe prevented all reſiſtance. From the remoteneſs of their ſituation, the people of this ſettlement thinking themſelves in perfect ſecurity, were

were under no apprehenſions of any attack; and little imagined that any enemy would have the patience, and undergo the toil of ſeeking them out at the diſtance of twelve hundred miles.

The inhabitants were all ſecured to a man, in order to prevent intelligence being carried to the other places in the ſettlement. Parties were immediately detached to ſeize upon theſe: they all ſurrendered; and an oath of allegiance to the United States was exacted from the inhabitants of the whole ſettlement. It was taken with the more readineſs, as they were now informed of the alliance between France and the Colonies.

Colonel Clarke behaved throughout the whole of this tranſaction with great mildneſs and humanity. The only action of ſeverity, was the ſeizing of the Governor, and ſending him priſoner to Virginia, as an individual whoſe perſonal enmity to the Coloniſts, rendered it proper to ſecure him. His papers were ſeized at the ſame time, and tranſmitted to Congreſs; as containing proofs of the orders he had received for encouraging and employing the Indians againſt the back ſettlements.

Having executed this firſt and principal part of his expedition with ſo much celerity and ſucceſs, Colonel Clarke now prepared to fulfill the remainder of his commiſſion, which was to take proper vengeance on the Indians for the many acts of cruelty they had committed on the Coloniſts. He advanced with equal courage and circumſpection into the midſt of the country occupied by ſome of their moſt fierce and warlike tribes. He came ſeverally upon them with ſo much quickneſs and ſecrecy, as to put it out of their power to reſiſt him: he retaliated upon them the deſtruction they had ſo often carried into the Colonies: he ſought them out with unwearied diligence, in their moſt hidden concealments, and ſtruck them with ſuch univerſal terror, that all who

who could eſcape, fled to the remoteſt receſſes of the immenſe tracts they inhabited.

The ſlaughter made among the Indians in this expedition, not only thinned their numbers conſiderably, but broke their ſpirit in no leſs degree. The inhabitants of the frontiers were now entirely relieved from their fears, and determined, at the ſame time, to take ſuch meaſures for their future defence, as ſhould put an effectual ſtop to all attempts on the part of thoſe ſavage enemies.

The deſtruction of Wioming ſtill hung upon the minds of the Coloniſts. They who had acted the principal part in it, inhabited a tract lying beyond the mountains to the weſtern ſide of the Upper Delaware. It was ſpacious and well cultivated: the people were an intermixture of Indians and Refugees, and bore, as their actions had ſhewn, an inveterate hatred to the inhabitants of the United Colonies. The force that was ſent againſt them, conſiſted of a regiment from the American army, and a conſiderable body of riflemen and rangers.

The intent was to ſurprize theſe people, and to treat them in the ſame manner they had done the unhappy inhabitants of Wioming. To this purpoſe they proceeded with the utmoſt cautiouſneſs and vigilance; marching chiefly by night, and concealing themſelves by day. But the enemy, who knew the reſolution that had been taken, to inflict the ſevereſt chaſtiſement upon them for their enormities at Wioming, and dreaded the conſequences of a ſurprize, kept a continual watch upon their borders. On the approach of this force, finding themſelves unable to reſiſt it, they withdrew, and abandoned their poſſeſſions to the fury of a juſtly exaſperated foe, who ſpread deſtruction without mercy throughout the whole extent of the country.

In theſe reciprocal expeditions againſt each other, by the Americans who ſided with, and thoſe who oppoſed

oppoſed Congreſs, was exhibited a ſpirit of rancour and revenge, that animated both parties to the moſt violent exertions of their reſpective courage and abilities. They underwent the ſevereſt toil and fatigue with invincible patience, and bore the moſt trying hardſhips with unwearied fortitude. Loaded with the ammunition, ſtores, and proviſions neceſſary for ſuch expeditions, they waded though ſwamps and marſhes, and made their way through foreſts that ſeemed almoſt impaſſable without ſuch incumbrances. Oftentimes, after ſtruggling during a whole days march, with all theſe various difficulties, they were conſtrained to paſs the night without ſhelter, expoſed to all the inclemencies of the weather, and not daring to make a fire, or even ſometimes to uſe any light, for fear of being diſcovered.

When engaged in fight, their fury and inveteracy was ſuch, that death, and ſlaughter were the only objects they had in view: they fought like men who expected no quarter, and thought it their duty to give none. They looked upon their enemies as criminals, whom they were commiſſioned to puniſh without mercy. Such an idea diveſted them at once of all ſentiments of humanity, and led them to the commiſſion of all ſorts of barbarities, without feeling the leaſt remorſe.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Arrival of a Miniſter from France to the Congreſs.— Tranſactions of the Commiſſioners in America.

1778.

DURING the tranſactions that have been related, ſeveral events of importance were taking place at Philadelphia, now become again the reſidence of Congreſs, ſince its evacuation by the Britiſh troops.

A Miniſter Plenipotentiary to the United States of America, was ſent over by the Court of France in Count D'Eſtaing's fleet; his name was Monſieur Gerard, one of the Secretaries to the King's Council of State. He was received with great ſolemnity by the Congreſs, to whom he delivered a letter from the King of France, written in the following terms:

August 6, 1778.

"*Very dear great Friends and Allies,*

"The treaties which we have ſigned with you in conſequence of the propoſals your Commiſſioners made to us in your behalf, are a certain aſſurance of our affection for the United States in general, and for each of them in particular, as well as of the intereſt we take, and conſtantly ſhall take, in their happineſs and proſperity. It is to convince you more particularly of this, that we have nominated the Sieur Gerard, Secretary of our Council of State, to reſide among you in the quality of our Miniſter Plenipotentiary. He is the better acquainted with our ſentiments toward you, and the more capable of teſtifying the ſame to you, as he

was

was entruſted on our part to negociate with your Commiſſioners, and ſigned with them the treaties which cement our union. We pray you to give juſt credit to all he ſhall communiſe to you from us, more eſpecially when he ſhall aſſure you of our affection and conſtant friendſhip for you. We pray God, very dear great Friends and Allies, to have you in his holy keeping.

Your good Friend and Ally,

Verſailles, LOUIS.

March 28, 1778.

(Underſigned)

GRAVIER DE VERGENNES."

The direction to this letter was, "To our very dear great Friends, the Preſident and Members of the General Congreſs of North America."

After this letter had been read, the Miniſter made the following ſpeech to the Congreſs:

"GENTLEMEN,

"The connection formed by the King, my maſter, with the United States of America, is ſo agreeable to him, that he could no longer delay ſending me to remain among you, for the purpoſe of cementing it.

"It will give his Majeſty great ſatisfaction to learn that the ſentiments which have ſhone forth on this occaſion, juſtify that confidence with which he has been inſpired by the zeal and character of the Commiſſioners of the United States in France, the wiſdom and fortitude which have directed the reſolutions of Congreſs, and the courage and perſeverance of the people they repreſent; a confidence which you know, Gentlemen, has been the baſis of that truly amicable and diſintereſted ſyſtem on which he has treated with the United States.

"It is not his Majesty's fault that the engagements he has entered into did not establish your independence and repose without the further effusion of blood, and without aggravating the calamities of mankind, whose happiness it is his highest ambition to promote and secure. But since the hostile measures and designs of the common enemy have given to engagements purely eventual, an immediate, positive, permanent, and indissoluble force, it is the opinion of the King, my master, that the allies should turn their whole attention to fulfill those engagements in the manner the most useful to the common cause, and best calculated to obtain that peace which is the object of the alliance.

"It is upon this principle his Majesty has hastened to send you a powerful assistance; which you owe only to his friendship, to the sincere regard he has for every thing which relates to the advantage of the United States, and to his desire of contributing with efficacy to establish your repose and prosperity upon an honourable and solid foundation.—And further, it is his expectation, that the principles which may be adopted by the respective governments will tend to strengthen those bonds of union which have originated in the mutual interest of the two nations.

"The principal object of my instructions is to connect the interests of France with those of the States. I flatter myself, Gentlemen, that my past conduct in the affairs which concern them, has already convinced you of the determination I feel to endeavour to obey my instructions in such manner as to deserve the confidence of Congress, the friendship of its members, and the esteem of the citizens of America."

The answer returned by the President of the Congress was as follows:—

"SIR,

"SIR,

"The treaties between his Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty and the United States of America, ſo fully demonſtrate his wiſdom and magnanimity, as to command the reverence of all nations. The virtuous citizens of America in particular, can never forget his beneficent attention to their violated rights, nor ceaſe to acknowledge the hand of a gracious Providence, in raiſing them up ſo powerful and illuſtrious a friend. It is the hope and opinion of Congreſs, that the confidence his Majeſty repoſes in the firmneſs of theſe States, will receive additional ſtrength from every day's experience.

"This Aſſembly is convinced, Sir, that had it reſted ſolely with the Moſt Chriſtian King, not only the independence of theſe States would have been univerſally acknowledged, but their tranquility fully eſtabliſhed. We lament that luſt of domination which gave birth to the preſent war, and has prolonged and extended the miſeries of mankind. We ardently wiſh to ſheath the ſword, and ſpare the further effuſion of blood; but we are determined, by every means in our power, to fulfill thoſe eventual engagements which have acquired poſitive and permanent force, from the hoſtile deſigns and meaſures of the common enemy.

"Congreſs have reaſon to believe, that the aſſiſtance ſo wiſely and generouſly ſent, will bring Great Britain to a ſenſe of juſtice and moderation, promote the common intereſts of France and America, and ſecure peace and tranquility on the moſt firm and honourable foundation. Neither can it be doubted, that thoſe who adminiſter the powers of government within the ſeveral States of this union, will cement that connection with the ſubjects of France, the beneficial effects of which have already been ſo ſenſibly felt.

"Sir, from the experience we have had of your exertions to promote the true intereſts of our country, as well as your own, it is with the higheſt ſatisfaction Congreſs receive, as the firſt Miniſter from his Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty, a gentleman whoſe paſt conduct affords a happy preſage, that he will merit the confidence of this body, the friendſhip of its members, and the eſteem of the citizens of America."

The arrival and reception of the miniſter from France, made a remarkable impreſſion on the minds of the Americans. They now felt the weight and importance to which they had ariſen among the European nations. "Thus," ſaid they, "in one of their publications at that time, "has a new and noble ſight been exhibited in this new world; the Repreſentatives of the United States of America, ſolemnly giving public audience to a Miniſter Plenipotentiary from the moſt powerful Prince in Europe. Four years ago, ſuch an event, at ſo near a day, was not in the view even of imagination. It is the Almighty who raiſeth up: He has ſtationed America among the powers of the earth, and cloathed her in robes of ſovereignty."

The preſence of this miniſter, the ſtrong aſſurances of ſupport which he brought, the arrival of the fleet under Count D'Eſtaing, the evacuation of Philadelphia, and the retreat of the army, were events which happening altogether, elevated the ſpirit of the Americans to ſuch a degree, that they no longer conſidered their deſtiny as any ways precarious: they looked upon their independence as thoroughly eſtabliſhed, and viewed the ſending of the Commiſſioners from England as an inſult.

It was from theſe motives that they continued to inſiſt with ſuch firmneſs on the immediate acknowledgement of their independence, or the withdrawing

ing of the fleet and army from their country, as the preliminary ſtep to any treaty.

Governor Johnſtone, whoſe abilities had recommended him to the place of one of the Commiſſioners, was extenſively connected among the principal perſonages on the American continent, where he had been ſome years before promoted to the government of a province. He had always acted a ſtrenuous part in defence of the claims of America, no man in Parliament having eſpouſed their cauſe with more warmth and deciſion.

He had, on his arrival in America, opened a correſpondence with ſome of the principal Members of Congreſs, on a footing of private friendſhip, from which he hoped to derive eſſential utility to the public commiſſion with which he was inveſted. His letters contained the warmeſt elogiums on the character and behaviour of the Americans, and were entirely calculated to bring about a cordial reconciliation.

The more to conciliate their good-will and confidence, he had carefully abſtained from all juſtification of the propriety or policy of the conduct adopted by Great Britain. He preſerved, on the contrary, an entire appearance of neutrality in the diſpute between the parent ſtate and its colonies, and confined himſelf to deplore the fatal effects it had produced.

This method of proceeding appeared certainly very judicious, yet in the iſſue did not anſwer expectation. By whatever motives the Congreſs were determined, they diſapproved of it. A few days after the correſpondence had been opened with the Commiſſioners, they came to a reſolution, that ſome of the letters addreſſed to individuals of the United States, had been found to contain ideas inſidiouſly calculated to delude and divide the people. They therefore earneſtly recommended to the government of the reſpective States, and ſtrictly directed the

Commander in Chief, and other officers, to take the moſt effectual meaſures for putting a ſtop to ſo dangerous and criminal a correſpondence.

This reſolution was ſhortly followed by another, by which all letters of a public nature, received by any Members of Congreſs from the agents or ſubjects of the King of Great Britain, ſhould be laid before that Aſſembly. In conſequence of this order, ſeveral letters were laid before them. In one from Governor Johnſtone to General Joſeph Reed, this paſſage was particularly obſerved:—"The man who can be inſtrumental in bringing us all to act once more in harmony, and unite together the various powers which this conteſt has drawn forth, will deſerve more from the King and people, from patriotiſm, humanity, friendſhip, and all the tender ties that are affected by the quarrel and reconciliation, than ever was yet beſtowed on human kind."

In another letter written by him to Mr. Robert Morris, the following paſſage fell under the ſame notice:—"I believe the men who have conducted the affairs of America incapable of being influenced by improper motives: but in all ſuch tranſactions there is riſk; and I think that whoever ventures, ſhould be ſecured, at the ſame time that honour and emolument ſhould naturally follow the fortunes of thoſe who have ſteered the veſſel in the ſtorm, and brought her ſafely into port. I think Waſhington and the Preſident have a right to every favour that grateful nations can beſtow, if they could once more unite our intereſts, and ſpare the miſeries and devaſtations of war."

But that which gave Congreſs the moſt offence, was the following tranſaction, as ſtated by General Reed.—A few days after the evacuation of Philadelphia by the Britiſh troops, he received a meſſage from a Lady, expreſſing a deſire to ſee him, on buſineſs which could not be committed to writing.—

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He attended the Lady according to appointment. After ſome previous converſation reſpecting the buſineſs and character of the Britiſh Commiſſioners, and particularly of Governor Johnſtone, the Lady enlarged upon the great talents of that gentleman, and added, that in ſeveral converſations, he had expreſſed the moſt favourable ſentiments of him; and that it was particularly wiſhed to engage his intereſt to promote the object of their commiſſion, the re-union of the two countries, if conſiſtent with his principles and his judgment; that in ſuch caſe, it could not be deemed unbecoming or improper in the Britiſh government to take a favourable notice of ſuch conduct; and that were he to become inſtrumental in the performance of ſuch a ſervice, he might depend on a reward of ten thouſand pounds, and any office in the Colonies in the King's gift." The reply of Mr. Reed was, that he was not worth purchaſing: but that ſuch as he was, the King of Great Britain was not rich enough to do it.

Having deliberated upon this tranſaction, and the foregoing paragraphs, the Congreſs publiſhed a declaration, by which they were laid before the public as direct attempts to bribe them, and corrupt their integrity: they interdicted at the ſame time all intercourſe and correſpondence with Governor Johnſtone.

This declaration, which was ſent by a flag to the Commiſſioners, produced a very ſevere anſwer from Governor Johnſtone. He harged Congreſs with endeavouring to aſperſe his character; and among other reproaches, he attributed their conduct, in the preſent inſtance, to a fixed determination to fruſtrate the intent of the commiſſion appointed for the reſtoration of peace and concord between Great Britain and the Colonies.

The other Commiſſioners iſſued upon this occaſion a counter-declaration, wherein they diſclaimed all

all participation and knowledge of thoſe matters that had been ſpecified by Congreſs in their reſolutions. They expreſſed, at the ſame time, the higheſt opinion of the abilities of Governor Johnſtone, of the uprightneſs of his intentions, and of the equitableneſs and generoſity of thoſe ſentiments and principles upon which he was deſirous of founding a reconciliation between the diſunited parts of the Britiſh empire.

They next proceeded to repreſent the connection entered into with France, as repugnant to the real intereſt of the Colonies; and aſſerted, that they were greatly deceived in thinking themſelves under obligations to that power; as the advantages it held out to them, originated merely from the determination taken in Britain to offer ſuch terms of reconciliation to the Colonies as they could not refuſe.

They accuſed the Congreſs of having, in conſequence of the treaties with France, acted with raſhneſs and precipitation. They repreſented that Aſſembly as incompetent to decide by its ſole authority, upon matters of ſuch importance as thoſe they had aſſumed the power of bringing to a concluſion. Their conſtituents ought in ſo weighty a caſe to have been conſulted, and the ſenſe of their different Provinces taken, in their reſpective meetings, previous to a final deciſion.

Though Congreſs did not itſelf publiſh any anſwer to this declaration, it was ſeverely animadverted upon by thoſe who took up the pen in their defence. The Commiſſioners had advanced ſeveral facts in proof of their aſſertion, that the French treaty with America, was entirely due to the apprehenſions entertained by the Court of France, that the conciliatory propoſals made by the Britiſh miniſtry would be accepted by the Americans. Theſe facts, the writers on the ſide of Congreſs laboured with great induſtry

induſtry to invalidate, and to prove, at the ſame time, that the very reverſe of what the commiſſioners had aſſerted was true: that inſtead of France being influenced by the conciliatory bill to treat with Congreſs, it was Great Britain that was induced by that treaty to offer terms of conciliation to the Colonies.

The principal view of the Commiſſioners in publiſhing that, and their other declarations, was to make an impreſſion upon the minds of the people at large throughout the continent; but they were not more ſucceſsful with them than they had been with Congreſs. They were given to underſtand that the people were of the ſame mind with that body; that the members of the Provincial Aſſemblies throughout the whole continent were reſolutely determined to abide by their declararion of independence; that it was in conformity with this unanimous reſolution, Congreſs had refuſed to treat with them upon any other terms; the individuals who compoſed it were inſtructed by their conſtituents in the moſt poſitive, explicit terms, at every hazard to maintain the independence of America. Upon this point all America was inflexible: ſhould any man in Congreſs dare to expreſs himſelf in favour of a contrary propoſal, he would endanger his very life.

The Commiſſioners were now perſuaded that all hopes of detaching any of the Colonies, or any conſiderable diſtrict, or body of men, from the general confederacy, were vain. In this perſuaſion, they thought it neceſſary to adopt a different ſyſtem of acting from that which they had hitherto purſued; and as conciliatory offers would not prevail, to have recourſe to the moſt hoſtile and ſevere.

The proſecution of harſh meaſures had long been conſidered and recommended by the friends to the plan of coercion, as the readieſt and moſt effectual. They would bring ſuch diſtreſs on the Colonies, as would

would not fail to compel them to ſubmit. They repreſented that vaſt continent as peculiarly open to incurſions and ravages: its coaſts were of ſo immenſe an extent, that they could not poſſibly be guarded againſt an enemy that was maſter at ſea; there were innumerable bays, creeks, and inlets, where to make deſcents unobſtructed. The rivers were ſuch as afforded a navigation for ſhips of force far into the interior parts of the country: by ſuch means it would be eaſy to penetrate to moſt of the towns and ſettlements, and to ſpread deſtruction into the heart of every province on the continent.

In purſuance of this determination, the commiſſioners publiſhed, in the beginning of October, a proclamation, which was addreſſed, in ſpecific terms, to the Congreſs, to the Provincial Aſſemblies, and to the Inhabitants of the Colonies at large.

Herein they took a retroſpect of the tranſactions and conduct of Congreſs, charging them with an obſtinate rejection of the proffers of reconciliation on the part of Britain, and repreſenting them as unauthoriſed to exerciſe the powers they had aſſumed. They recapitulated their own endeavours to bring about a reſtoration of peace and happineſs to America, and gave notice of their intent to return to England, as their ſtay in a country where their commiſſion had been treated with ſo little notice and reſpect, was inconſiſtent with the dignity of the power which they repreſented. They profeſſed, however, the ſame readineſs as ever, to promote the objects of their miſſion, and to continue the conciliatory offers that were its principal motive.

After ſeveral earneſt admonitions directed to the public bodies, and different orders of men, civil, military, and religious in general, and to all the individuals throughout the Colonies in particular, they proceeded to inform them of the alteration they ſhould be under the neceſſity of making, in the future

ture method of carrying on the war, ſhould the Colonies perſiſt in their reſiſtance to Great Britain, and in the unnatural connection they had formed with France.

"The policy, as well as the benevolence of Great Britain," ſaid they, "has hitherto checked the extremes of war, when they tended to diſtreſs a people, ſtill conſidered as fellow ſubjects, and to deſolate a country ſhortly to become again a ſource of mutual advantage; but when that country profeſſes the unnatural deſign, not only of eſtranging herſelf from us, but of mortgaging herſelf and her reſources to our enemies, the whole conteſt is changed; and the queſtion is, how far Great Britain may, by every means in her power, deſtroy or render uſeleſs, a connection contrived for her ruin, and for the aggrandiſement of France?"

"Under ſuch circumſtances, the laws of ſelf-preſervation muſt direct the conduct of Great Britain; and if the Britiſh Colonies are to become an acceſſion of power to France, will direct her to render that acceſſion of as little avail as poſſible to her enemy."

"It will now become the Colonies," added they, "to call to mind their own ſolemn appeals to Heaven, in the beginning of this conteſt, that they took up arms only for the redreſs of grievances; and that it would be their wiſh, as well as their intereſt, to remain for ever connected with Great Britain. We again aſk them, Whether all their grievances, real or ſuppoſed, have not been amply and fully redreſſed? And we inſiſt that the offers we have made, leave nothing to be wiſhed in point either of immediate liberty, or of permanent ſecurity. If theſe offers are now rejected, we withdraw from the exerciſe of a commiſſion, with which we have in vain been honoured. The ſame liberality will no longer

longer be due from Great Britain; nor can it either in juſtice or policy be expected from her."

In order to mitigate the ſeverity of this and the foregoing declaration, they next proceeded to grant and proclaim a general pardon for all treaſonable offences committed during the preſent conteſt, from its commencement to the preſent time, without any exception whatſoever; and they offered to the Colonies at large, or ſeparately, a general or ſeperate peace, with the revival of their ancient governments, ſecured againſt any future infringements, and protected for ever from taxation by Great Britain.

The publiſhing of this proclamation produced an immediate warning from Congreſs, to all the inhabitants of the Colonies, who lived in places expoſed to deſcents and ravages, to remove on the appearance of danger to the diſtance of at leaſt thirty miles, together with their cattle and all their moveable property.

"This," it was added, in the words of the warning, "could not be thought a hardſhip in ſuch times of public calamity, when ſo many of their gallant countrymen were daily expoſed to the toils and perils of the field, fighting in defence of the public."

This warning was accompanied with a reſolution of Congreſs, by which it was recommended, that "Whenever the Britiſh troops proceeded to burn or deſtroy any town, the people ſhould, in the ſame manner, ravage, burn, and deſtroy the houſes and properties of all tories, and enemies to the independence of America, and ſecure their perſons; without treating them, however, or their families, with any cruelty."

In addition to this warning, they iſſued a manifeſto, conceived in the ſtrongeſt and moſt pointed terms that were applicable to the object they had in view.

It ſet forth, that the inhabitants of America had been driven by the oppreſſive meaſures of Great Britain to take up arms, and declare themſelves independent.

"Confiding in the juſtice of their cauſe," ſaid they: "Confiding in him who diſpoſes of human events, although weak and unprovided, they ſet the power of their enemies at defiance. In this confidence they had continued three bloody campaigns."

"Conſidering themſelves as children of that Being who is the common father of all, they had been deſirous to alleviate, at leaſt, as they could not prevent, the calamities of war."

But they aſſerted, that the conduct of thoſe who acted in the ſervice of Great Britain, had been the very reverſe.

After ſeveral heavy charges, and expreſſing themſelves with the utmoſt acrimony reſpecting various particulars, they concluded by declaring, "That if any of their enemies ſhould preſume to execute the threats contained in their late proclamation, they would take ſuch exemplary vengeance, as ſhould deter others from a like conduct."

This manifeſto was accompanied with a variety of publications from private individuals, all written with great ſtrength of ſtile, and animation of thought. Their general aim was to impreſs the commiſſioners with the fulleſt belief, that an attempt to procure a return of obedience to Great Britain on the part of the Colonies, was totally fruitleſs and impracticable.

But excluſive of this object, they launched into a number of diſcuſſions relating to the conduct of Britain, which they reprobated with unreſerved aſperity of language and manner. They ſpared no character, and repreſented every tranſaction in the moſt opprobrious light.

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Among theſe publications, was a letter addreſſed to the commiſſioners, on the ſubjects of their late proclamation. They were examined with a freedom and boldneſs that ſet all reſtraint at defiance. The truth was, the Americans conſidered it as an effort that ought never to be repeated; and were determined, by their treatment of it, to diſcourage and baniſh for ever all ideas of renewing any attempt of the like nature.

After going through every paragraph of the proclamation, with the utmoſt latitude of thought and expreſſion, when the letter came to that part of it which denounces threats of revenge and devaſtation; "Thus," it ſays, "after three years of conſtant hoſtilities, of a war proſecuted in a manner which has aſtoniſhed all Europe, cenſured and reprobated by your ableſt ſenators, we are now told that Great Britain will no longer extend her mercy towards this country."

"But were you able to ſatiate your revengeful appetites, by rioting in ſlaughter and deſolation along our ſea coaſts, it would but more completely rivet our union with France: America would then be rendered more dependent on her, and other European powers, for a thouſand articles which ſhe might otherwiſe be willing to import from Britain. This ſtep alone ſeems wanting to complete the ruin of your country."

In this manner did the Americans vent themſelves upon every ſubject that was brought in agitation relating to them. Convinced that all the endeavours of Britain, to reduce them, would be thrown away, they took unbounded liberties with every object wherein ſhe was concerned; and looking upon her as an irreconcilable foe, they took a peculiar delight in repreſenting her as utterly undone.

The inutility of the commiſſion from which ſo much had been expected in England, became daily more

more evident. It was with difficulty the Congreſs could bring themſelves to treat it with any remnant of reſpect, or even decorum. Shortly after the retreat of the Britiſh army to New York, the commiſſioners wrote a letter to Congreſs, in anſwer to that wherein they notified their reſolution to admit of no treaty, without a previous acknowledgment of the independence of America: but Congreſs reſolved that no anſwer ſhould be given to it; and by way of ſlight, publiſhed the letter and their reſolution.

Nor could they, in their private capacity, eſcape the animadverſion of individuals. As they had in their public declarations reflected upon the conduct of France with great freedom of expreſſion, the Marquis Fayette conſtrued it as an inſult, which he was bound perſonally to reſent. He wrote, accordingly, a letter to the Earl of Carliſle, as the principal member of the commiſſion, wherein he complained of the reflections caſt upon his country, demanding reparation, and challenging that nobleman to meet him in the field, with General Clinton for his ſecond.

From the unreaſonableneſs and impropriety of ſuch a challenge, it was attended with no conſequence; and only ſerved to ſhew the ſpirit and zeal of that young nobleman for the honour of his country. It was, however, a mortification to perſons inveſted with a public character, to find themſelves called to account in a manner which ſeemed to diminiſh their importance.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Military Operations in America.

1778.

DURING theſe tranſactions in the north and middle Colonies, ſome hoſtilities had taken place between the people of Georgia and Eaſt Florida; but as neither of theſe Colonies were poſſeſſed of much internal ſtrength, their accidental incurſions upon each others territories, though they indicated their reſpective warmth in the cauſe they had eſpouſed, produced no events of any material conſequence.

An expedition was, however, projected by the Americans, and partly carried into execution, in the ſpring of this year. Its intent was to eſtabliſh a communication with the Spaniſh government at New Orleans, and to pave the way for a reduction of the Britiſh poſſeſſions in Weſt Florida.

The perſon entruſted with this expedition, was Captain Willing, a reſolute and enterprizing man. At the head of no very numerous party, but conſiſting of men choſen by himſelf, he fell down the Miſſiſſippi, and came totally unawares upon the Britiſh ſettlements on the eaſt of that river, in a country that made a part of Weſt Florida; but was ſituated at too great a diſtance to receive any protection, on this occaſion, from the forces that were ſtationed there.

The American officer treated them with great generoſity. Upon ſubmitting to the government of the United States, their property remained untouched, and they were placed upon the footing of all thoſe who paid obedience to Congreſs.

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This conqueſt, though of little importance in itſelf, awakened the attention of the people at New York to the ſouthern parts of America. As the winter was now approching, during which it would be unadviſable to form enterprizes againſt the northern Provinces, thoſe in the ſouth became, of courſe, the moſt eligible objects.

Among theſe, Georgia ſeemed to offer the leaſt difficulties, and to promiſe, at the ſame time, great advantages from a reduction. It abounded in a production of the utmoſt utility. This was rice, which, in the preſent circumſtances of the Britiſh army, was a principal neceſſary of life, and an effectual ſubſtitute for a variety of thoſe proviſions which they could only receive from Europe.

Other motives concurred in rendering this attempt highly ſeaſonable; the vicinity of Georgia to Carolina, would, in caſe of its being reduced, open an entrance into this latter province, and materially diſturb the commerce it carried on with Europe, to the great emolument of America; of which it had proved a powerful ſupport ſince the commencement of hoſtilities, by the conſtant and plentiful exportation of its commodities to all parts.

The command of this expedition was given to Colonel Campbell, an officer of known courage and ability. He embarked at New York, with a competent force, under the convoy of ſome ſhips of war, commanded by Commodore Hyde Parker.

In order to give additional ſtrength to this enterprize, it was determined that an attack upon Georgia ſhould be made from another quarter. To this intent, General Prevoſt was directed to advance from the ſide of Eaſt Florida, where he commanded, with all the troops that he could collect, leaving no more than were abſolutely requiſite for the immediate protection of that Colony. Happily, its ſituation was ſuch, as expoſed it to very little

apprehenſions of any attack from the Americans, at this time.

The forces that ſailed from New York, arrived at the entrance of the river Savannah, about the end of December. In order to obtain information of the condition and circumſtances of the place, and the ſtrength and ſituation of the enemy, a party of light infantry and ſailors were ſent up a creek in flat-bottomed boats: they luckily ſeized and brought off two men, by whom they were informed, that the batteries that had been erected to guard the river, were, from being out of repair, become unſerviceable; that the garriſon was very weak; but that troops were hourly expected.

Upon this intelligence, preparations were immediately made for a deſcent. The armed veſſels led the way, followed by the tranſports: the water was ſo ſhallow, that a number of them grounded; but through the judicious exertions of Captain Stanhope of the navy, who ſerved as a volunteer upon this occaſion, this obſtruction was quickly ſurmounted. The tranſports were got off the flats, and the troops were embarked in the flat boats, in which they rowed up the river, and took their ſtation off the landing place. It being dark at their arrival, and the enemy appearing by the fires on the ſhore to be prepared for defence, it was found neceſſary to wait for the return of day.

The place at which it was intended to land, was of great natural ſtrength. Its acceſs was extremely difficult; and had it been properly fortified, would have proved impracticable: but it was the only place at which a landing could be attempted: the whole extent of land that lay between it and the iſle of Tybee, at the entrance of the river, conſiſting of ſwamps and marſhes, interſected by deep and large creeks, impaſſable at the loweſt water.

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The diviſion that lay off the landing place during the night, made good its landing at break of day. It was commanded by Colonel Maitland. A narrow cauſeway, ſix hundred yards long, and flanked with a ditch on each ſide, led from this ſpot to a houſe ſeated upon a high and ridgy ground. This houſe Colonel Maitland reſolved inſtantly to ſecure: to this purpoſe a body of light infantry formed directly, as ſoon as landed, and moved forwards with all ſpeed along the cauſeway. On their approach to the houſe, they received a heavy fire from a party of the enemy, ſtationed on their way, by which Captain Cameron, who headed the light infantry, was killed. But his men, provoked at the loſs of their commander, ruſhed upon them ſo quickly, that they had no time to charge again, and were forced to betake themſelves to a neighbouring wood.

Having ſecured the landing place, the remainder of the troops came aſhore, and took poſt on the ground near the houſe, at the head of the cauſeway. From hence they commanded an extenſive view of the country, and could obſerve all the motions of the enemy. A large reinforcement was juſt arrived, and was at this very time forming in order of battle, between the town and the Britiſh troops.

Colonel Campbell, who deſcried them from the height where he was poſted, reſolved to advance forwards and attack them without delay, before they had time either to take a more advantageous poſition, or to fortify that which they had taken.

Having ſecured his communication with the landing place, the Colonel led his troops up the main road towards the town. On its left, he was guarded by a thick wood in a ſwampy ground; on its right ſtood ſeveral plantations, which were occupied by the light infantry which he detached for that purpoſe.

From the many ditches and incloſures, and other impediments of that nature in the way of the Britiſh troops, notwithſtanding they begun their movements early in the morning, it was three in the afternoon before they could clear theſe obſtructions, and gain the open grounds.

On their approaching the enemy, they found him poſted apparently to much advantage. They had choſen a ſituation, wheron if they had been attacked, it would have been very difficult to force them.—They were drawn up in exceeding good order, covered by ſwamps on their right and left; acroſs the road, in the centre of their front, between two marſhy ſpots, a deep trench was cut, and about a hundred yards abreaſt of this trench, a rivulet ran in the ſame direction, the bridge over which they had broken down: ſeveral pieces of cannon were planted on their flanks and centre.

This diſpoſition of the enemy threatened an obſtinate diſpute, before they could be diſlodged.—While Colonel Campbell was making the neceſſary arrangements for this purpoſe, his good fortune threw a negro into his hands, from whom he received ſuch intelligence as decided at once the fortune of the day.

This negro, upon examination, was found to be acquainted with a private path through a ſwampy foreſt on the enemy's right. It happened fortunately that the way to this path lay behind a hollow, through which the troops might march unobſerved by the enemy.

Upon this intelligence, Sir James Baird was directed by the Colonel to march through this path with the light infantry, to turn the enemy's right wing, and aſſail them in the rear.

While this movement was performing, the artillery was brought up, and formed in the hollow, in ſuch a poſition as to be ready, at a proper warning,

to

to be hauled up to the rising ground before it, from whence it would command the right of the enemy, and protect the troops in the wood.

As soon as Colonel Campbell judged that the light infantry had cleared its passage through the path, and begun their attack upon the rear, he directed the artillery to move up to the ground in its front, and the whole line to advance upon the enemy with all speed: the charge was so brisk and resolute, that they were quickly broken and dispersed.

By this time, Sir James Baird, at the head of the light infantry, had made good his way through the wood, and was proceeding to execute his orders, when he met with a body of militia, with cannon, drawn up on an advantageous ground, to secure the right flank of their army from any attack on that quarter: he charged them with so much vigour, that they were soon routed, with the loss of their cannon.

Retreating to their main body, they met it in the utmost disorder and confusion: the light infantry fell upon both, pursued them with great execution, and entirely completed the victory.

The success of the day was remarkable in every respect. Before evening, the enemy was defeated in battle; besides those that were slain, amounting to about one hundred and twenty, near five hundred were made prisoners, of whom thirty-eight were commissioned officers; the capital of the Province, its fort, with all its artillery, ammunition, and stores, a large quantity of provisions, and all the shipping in the river, fell into the possession of the victorious army.

The conduct of Colonel Campbell upon this occasion did him the highest honour; not only on account of the military skill he had displayed, but the care he took that no irregularities should be committed by the soldiery. Notwithstanding the

American troops retreated through the town of Savannah, and many of the inhabitants were in the ſtreets, none ſuffered in the purſuit but ſuch as had arms in their hands, and were found in actual reſiſtance, and every care was taken to prevent the houſes from being plundered.

It had been determined by the enemy, that if the town could not be preſerved, it ſhould, after the example of New York, be ſet on fire, to prevent its being of any utility to the Britiſh troops; but upon information of this deſign, the Britiſh commander took ſuch effectual precautions that nothing of that kind was attempted.

The ſpirit and activity with which both officers and ſoldiers exerted themſelves in this expedition, was truly conſpicuous. Without horſes to draw their artillery, nor waggons to carry their proviſions, they ſtill found means to purſue the broken remains of the enemy's forces, and to compel them to retire into Carolina.

On this ſucceſs of the Britiſh army, many of the inhabitants joined the Colonel, and declared in favour of Britain. They reſorted to him in ſuch numbers, that he was enabled to form them into companies of horſe and foot: they were employed in patroling the country, and in watching the enemy's motions in the neighbouring province of Carolina.

After thus defeating the united forces of the adverſe party in Carolina and Georgia, Colonel Campbell, and Commodore Parker, were of opinion that this would prove a favourable opportunity to iſſue a proclamation, inviting the inhabitants to return to their allegiance to the Britiſh government, on the terms offered by the Commiſſioners, and to aſſiſt in the ſuppreſſion of thoſe who reſiſted it.

Their perſuaſion was juſtified by the event: the inhabitants, as ſoon as it was iſſued, flocked from all

all parts of the province to the King's ſtandard, and cordially took the oaths, and embraced the proffers made to them.

Further to eſtabliſh the public ſecurity, and check every attempt to diſturb the peace of individuals, pecuniary rewards were offered for apprehending of committee and aſſembly men, and others who came into the province with an intent to interrupt its tranquility, by raiſing inſurrections, or moleſting the inhabitants.

Such was the diligence uſed upon this occaſion by the Britiſh commanders, that in the ſpace of ten days from the landing of the troops, the whole province of Georgia was entirely recovered out of the hands of the enemy, its frontiers ſecured from invaſion, and ſuch a diſpoſition of the forces formed, as effectually ſhut up all the avenues leading from South Carolina: its internal government was ſettled at the ſame time on a footing that ſeemed to afford general ſatisfaction to all parties concerned.

During theſe tranſactions, General Prevoſt was advancing with all the troops he had been able to collect in Eaſt Florida. He had a multitude of difficulties to encounter on his march: the want of proviſions, and the difficulty of procuring them was ſuch, that all his troops, both officers and ſoldiers, were conſtrained for ſeveral days to live upon oyſters only; they ſubmitted to this hardſhip, as well as to thoſe reſulting from conſtant fatigue, aggravated by the exceſſive heat of the weather, with the moſt exemplary patience and chearfulneſs.—After overcoming theſe obſtructions, they arrived at length in ſight of Sunbury, the only place remaining to the Americans in Georgia. After a ſlight defence, as all communication and hope of relief was cut off, it ſurrendered at diſcretion; and General Prevoſt continuing his march, arrived at Savannah,

Savannah, where the command devolved to him, as ſenior officer.

In the mean time, Count D'Eſtaing had exerted himſelf ſo diligently at Boſton, that his ſquadron was now completely refitted, and in a condition to put to ſea.

He had employed the leiſure he had in that city, to ingratiate himſelf with the people of that Colony, by thoſe arts and methods in which the French are ſuch complete maſters. He had flattered them with complimentary diſcourſes, and laviſhed every poſſible commendation on their character and conduct in the preſent conteſt, and eſpecially on the meaſure of renouncing their political connection with Great Britain, and forming an alliance with France. He gave them frequent treats and entertainments, wherein nothing was omitted to impreſs them with advantageous notions of French taſte and magnificence. In one of theſe particularly, which was given on board the Languedoc, in order to recommend himſelf the more powerfully to his new allies, and to ſhow how highly he reſpected their alliance, he fixed the picture of General Waſhington in the moſt conſpicuous part of the place of entertainment, in a ſuperb frame, decorated with laurels.

By theſe, and the like methods, he obtained the favour and benevolence of the ruling people, and the genteeler claſſes, and not a little accelerated the aſſiſtance he wanted in a variety of reſpects.

Nor was he unmindful, at the ſame time, of a very eſſential part of the commiſſion with which he was charged, and which was a material object in his expedition to America: this was to revive the intereſt of France in her ancient Colony of Canada, and to excite the people to detach themſelves from the obedience to Great Britain, and to return to that of France,

France, or join themſelves to the United States of America.

In purſuance of this deſign, a declaration was publiſhed, addreſſed in the name of the King of France to the French inhabitants of Canada, and of every other part of America formerly ſubject to that Crown.

This declaration contained the higheſt praiſes of the valour of the Americans; it laid before the inhabitants of Canada the mortification they muſt endure in bearing arms againſt the allies of their parent ſtate; it repreſented to them in the ſtrongeſt terms, the ties formed by origin, language, manners, government, and religion, between the Canadians and the French, and lamented the misfortunes which had occaſioned a diſjunction of that Colony from France; it recalled to their remembrance the brave reſiſtance they had made during the many wars they had been engaged in againſt England, eſpecially the laſt; it reminded them of their favourite warriors and generals, particularly the valiant Montcalm, who fell at their head, in the defence of their country: it earneſtly entreated them to reflect ſeriouſly on their diſagreeable ſubjection to ſtrangers, living in another hemiſphere, differing from them in every poſſible reſpect, who could conſider them no otherwiſe than as a conquered people, and would always, of courſe, treat them accordingly. It concluded, by formally notifying, that the Count D'Eſtaing was authoriſed and commanded by the King of France, to declare in his name, that all his former ſubjects in North America, who ſhould renounce their allegiance to Great Britain, might depend on his protection and ſupport. This declaration was dated the twenty-eighth of October.

Great hopes were conceived of this declaration; nor were they ill founded, conſidering the natural attach-

attachment of all people for the land of their origin. Had Count D'Eſtaing ſucceeded in his original deſign, a recovery of Canada by France would probably have been one of the conſequences, or, at leaſt an union of it with their American allies.

But notwithſtanding the failure of his principal intent, the Americans conſidered his expedition, though attended with many diſappointments, as a deciſive event in their favour. It was one of the cauſes that had induced Britain to offer terms of accommodation; it had occaſioned the evacuation of Philadelphia; it had, by neceſſitating the Britiſh miniſtry to ſend Admiral Byron's ſquadron to the coaſt of America, given the French a ſuperiority in the European ſeas; it had prevented a detachment from the Britiſh fleet at New York from ſailing to the aſſiſtance of their Weſt India iſlands; it would, in all probability, compel the Britiſh troops to abandon America, through the deſtitution of ſupplies and reinforcements, which would now be wanted for the defence of thoſe iſlands. Theſe were great and manifeſt advantages, and amply counter-balanced the failures in other reſpects.

Notwithſtanding the endeavours of Count D'Eſtaing to render himſelf and his nation acceptable to the New England people, the inveteracy to the French, traditionally inherent in the lower claſſes, could not be reſtrained from breaking out in Boſton, in a manner that might have been attended with the moſt ſerious conſequences to the intereſts of both France and America, had not the prudence of the magiſtracy interpoſed, on the one hand, and the ſagacity of Count D'Eſtaing co-operated on the other.

A deſperate fray happened in that city between the populace and the French ſailors, in which theſe were very roughly handled, and had much the worſe. A number of them were hurt and wounded;

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and ſome, it was reported, were killed. By the diligent intervention of the ruling men, the tumult was appeaſed, and a proclamation was iſſued by the Council of State, enjoining the magiſtrates to make a ſtrict ſearch after the offenders, and offering a conſiderable reward for the diſcovery of thoſe who were concerned in cauſing the riot; but it produced no effect, and the authors remained concealed, if indeed there were any real deſire to bring them to light.

In order to obviate any reſentment on the part of the French, for the treatment they had received from the Americans, the whole affray was imputed to ſome Engliſh ſailors and ſoldiers, that had deſerted, and enliſted in the American ſervice. The French Admiral was too prudent not to admit the idea, and appeared perfectly ſatisfied with that apology, and the other meaſures that were taken to remove the evil impreſſions that muſt naturally ariſe among his countrymen, for the uſage they met with from a people whom they were come to protect from their enemies.

Preciſely at the ſame time, a diſturbance of the like nature happened at Charleſtown, in South Carolina, between the French and American ſeamen; but it was carried to much greater extremities: they engaged on both ſides with ſmall arms, and even with cannon. A number of people were killed and wounded.

This matter was conſidered in a very ſerious light by the legiſlative body of the province; a very conſiderable recompence was promiſed for the diſcovery of the promoters of this riot; the ſtricteſt injunctions were laid on the magiſtrates, and all perſons in authority, to exert their utmoſt vigilance in diſcountenancing all national reflections againſt the natives of France, from which, it ſeems, theſe riots proceeded.

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Theſe diſturbances were the unavoidable effects of an antipathy againſt the French, which could not eaſily be eradicated from the breaſt of a people who originated from England, and had from their infancy been bred in a ſtrong averſion to the ancient and inveterate enemy of a country which they had ſo long been taught to conſider as their own. In ſpite of the precautions taken by the more provident and circumſpectful among the Americans, by far the major part retained this hatred, and were at little pains to conceal it, even upon ſuch occaſions as required them to ſuppreſs it for their immediate intereſt.

Whatever neceſſity they were under to affect amity and attachment to the French, this inimical diſpoſition to them, had taken ſuch profound root, that it was only on public occurrences, where the united concerns of France and America were in queſtion, that they could prevail upon themſelves to diſſemble it. The French themſelves were too penetrating not to perceive it; but the objects they had in view, induced them to paſs over in ſilence many tranſactions highly mortifying to their national vanity. As thoſe in authority among them were from various cauſes more enabled to exert it, than perſons inveſted with it among their new allies, they uſed all their influence and ſway among their inferiors, to prevent them from ſhowing their reſentment, and did it ſo effectually, as to leave no apprehenſions in the minds of thoſe who preſided over the affairs of America, that any ill conſequences would enſue from theſe riots. They were conſcious that their enemies were not without hopes that accidents of this kind might prove the means of creating diſſentions of a more extenſive nature, and from that reaſon, they were the more earneſt in their endeavours to fruſtrate ſuch an expectation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Military Operations in the Weſt Indies.

1778.

THE ſquadron under the command of Admiral Byron, after meeting with a moſt tempeſtuous paſſage from England, had put into Halifax, from whence it arrived at New York about the middle of September.

His firſt care, on hearing of the French fleet under Count D'Eſtaing being at Boſton, was to put his own into ſuch a condition, as might enable him to watch his motions; but it was ſo terribly ſhattered by the ſtorms he had endured, that a full month was conſumed in repairing it.

The ſame ill fortune that had attended him ever ſince his departure from England, ſtill awaited him on the coaſt of America. As ſoon as he was arrived in Boſton bay, he was aſſailed by a ſtorm, in which his ſquadron ſuffered again ſo much, that it was obliged to take ſhelter at Rhode Iſland.

While the Britiſh Admiral was detained by the neceſſity of repairing the damages his ſhips had ſuſtained, Count D'Eſtaing embraced that opportunity of quitting the harbour of Boſton unmoleſted, and ſailing for the the Weſt Indies.

The French Admiral previous to his departure, began to feel extreme anxiety from the ſhortneſs of proviſions. There had been a great ſcarcity throughout the whole Province of Maſſachuſet, owing to the numerous captures of thoſe veſſels employed in the procuring of corn and flour, of which that Colony does not produce a ſufficiency for its own conſumption. Had this ſcarcity continued

nued, the French ſquadron would have been compelled to quit Boſton in the greateſt diſtreſs, from the impoſſibility of ſubſiſting there any longer.—Fortunately for both the French and the Americans, the New England privateers happened to fall in with ſuch a number of proviſion veſſels on their way from Europe to New York, as reſtored plenty to the whole country: not only the markets were freſh ſtocked, but the abundance was ſuch, that the government was enabled to victual the French fleet for a twelvemonth. With this ample ſupply, the French Admiral left Boſton on the third of November, and proceeded on his expedition to the ſouth.

As the object of this expedition was obvious, it was incumbent on the Britiſh commander at New York, to ſend ſuch reinforcements to the Weſt Indies as might counteract it, and put the iſlands belonging to Great Britain in thoſe parts, into ſuch a poſture of defence, as might effectually protect them from the attempts of the enemy.

The circumſtances of the war, and the method of carrying it on, had undergone a material change ſince the commencement of the campaign. As the ſyſtem of offenſive operations was different from what it had been during the two preceding years, and did not require the forces to be collected into ſo large a body as commonly, it became, of courſe, eaſier to employ them in ſeparate detachments, which by the rapidity of their motions, as they went by ſea, would be able to make the more effectual and forcible impreſſion, from its being ſudden and unexpected.

This alteration in the ſyſtem of hoſtilities, afforded, at the ſame time, a greater facility of providing for the ſafety of the Weſt India iſlands. A ſelection was accordingly made of ſome of the beſt troops in the ſervice, to the number of about five thouſand men, who embarked at New York, in a fleet

fleet of ſixty tranſports; they were commanded by General Grant, and eſcorted by Commodore Hotham, with five men of war of the line, and ſome frigates.

The protection of the Britiſh Weſt India iſlands, was, indeed, a buſineſs that admitted of no longer delay. Frequent repreſentations had been made to the miniſtry by the merchants in England, and the poſſeſſors of eſtates in thoſe iſlands, of their defenceleſs ſituation, and of the facility with which a very little force would be able to reduce them, ſhould thoſe hoſtilities break out between Great Britain and France which were now daily expected.

This anxiety was further increaſed by the continual preparations that were carrying forwards in the neighbouring French and Spaniſh iſlands. Martinico, the principal of the French Caribbee iſlands, was at this period under the government of one of the moſt active and enterprizing men that France had ever ſent to the Weſt Indies. He was conſtantly employed in forming projects againſt the poſſeſſions of Britain in thoſe ſeas, and longed to ſignalize himſelf by reducing them to the power of France.

Among thoſe iſles that had been ceded to Great Britain by the laſt treaty of peace, was Dominico. Its ſituation between Guadaloupe and Martinico, and commanding a view of both, rendered it an acquiſition of great importance in time of war. It had, for that reaſon, been carefully fortified, and provided with artillery; but from ſome unaccountable neglect, it had nothing that could be called a garriſon.

This defenceleſs ſtate of the iſland was well known to the Marquis De Bouille, the Governor of Martinico above-mentioned. He embarked at Martinico at the head of two thouſand land forces, about the beginning of September, and made a deſcent at

Dominico, where he found no more than one hundred regulars, and a few companies of militia to oppoſe him. The reſiſtance in ſuch circumſtances could not be great. As all endeavours to preſerve the place were evidently uſeleſs, it only remained to procure as favourable a capitulation as could be obtained.

The Marquis De Bouille acted upon this occaſion with a moderation that did much honour to his character. He granted every demand that was made. The garriſon were treated with all the honours of war, and the inhabitants ſecured in the poſſeſſion of all their property of every denomination. They were allowed to retain their internal government in all its forms: no change was to be made in the laws or the adminiſtration of juſtice. If at the termination of the war, the iſland ſhould be ceded to France, they were to have the option of retaining their preſent ſyſtem of government, or of conforming to that eſtabliſhed in the French iſlands. The only alteration they experienced, was, the transferring their obedience from Great Britain to France, as they were left in the unmoleſted enjoyment of all their rights, both civil and religious.

The Marquis De Bouille obſerved this capitulation with the ſtricteſt fidelity: no kind of plunder or irregularity was permitted. As a recompence for their ſervices upon this occaſion, he diſtributed a pecuniary gratification among the ſoldiers and volunteers who had accompanied him upon this expedition.

One hundred and ſixty-four pieces of excellent cannon, and twenty-four braſs mortars, were found on the fortifications and in the magazines of this iſland, beſides a large quantity of milirary ſtores. The French themſelves teſtified the utmoſt ſurprize at finding ſuch a number of warlike preparations with ſo few hands to make any uſe of them.

The only thing wanted was a garriſon: this deficiency was amply ſupplied by the Marquis De Bouille. Senſible of the importance of the conqueſt he had made, he left a garriſon on his departure, of fifteen hundred of the beſt troops he had.

When the news of the loſs of Dominico was brought to England, it revived the complaints of thoſe who had ſo often remonſtrated againſt the ſmallneſs of the force provided for the defence of that, and the other iſlands. The general indignation it excited, appeared the more juſtly founded, as the importance of this iſland was clearly underſtood, from the uncommon attention that had been beſtowed in fortifying it. Why the principal requiſite, a ſufficient military force, had not been ſtationed in a place of ſuch conſequence, was a matter of univerſal aſtoniſhment.

In aggravation of the grief that was felt upon this occaſion, Admiral Barrington lay at this time no further off than Barbadoes, with two ſhips of the line and ſome frigates. His orders were to remain in that ſtation till he received further inſtructions. He waited, accordingly, two months without receiving any, or even being apprized that hoſtilities had commenced between Great Britain and France.

As ſoon as he was informed of the attack upon Dominico, he thought himſelf no longer bound to remain paſſive for want of inſtructions, and ſailed with all poſſible ſpeed to its aſſiſtance. The force he had was fully ſufficient to have fruſtrated the attempt, had it been practicable for the garriſon to have prevented the French troops from making a deſcent; but that being effected, the Marquis De Bouille had nothing to apprehend from Admiral Barrington's ſuperiority in ſhipping, as he could, on hearing of his approach, retire in a few hours to Martinico, and the Admiral had no troops to attack thoſe that now were maſters of the iſland.

Notwithſtanding the arrival of Admiral Barrington deterred the French commander from making any further enterprizes at the preſent, the ſucceſs he had met with, was an ample reward for his activity. The poſſeſſion of Dominico by the Engliſh, had broken the chain of communication between the French iſlands, in a manner that expoſed them to a multiplicity of inconveniencies, eſpecially in time of war. This recovery of it at ſo critical a ſeaſon, reſtored them to their former ſituation, and greatly embarraſſed that of the Engliſh iſlands.

On receiving intelligence of the capture of Dominica, by the French, Sir Henry Clinton was convinced of the immediate neceſſity of ſending the ſpeedieſt ſuccours, to prevent any further diſaſters. It was become the more indiſpenſible, from the unfortunate detention of the ſquadron under Admiral Byron, to be refitted in conſequence of the detriment it had received in the ſtorm before Boſton.

The danger to which the armament deſtined for the Weſt Indies would be expoſed, was obvious. The French ſquadron was hourly expected to ſail from Boſton, and its track being the ſame as of that which was preparing to ſail from New York, it was much to be apprehended the former might fall in with the latter. The occaſion, however, was ſo preſſing, that it was determined to diſpatch it at all hazards.

But the good fortune of this fleet was ſingular. It ſailed from Sandy Hook the very day on which the French ſquadron, under Count D'Eſtaing, took its departure from Boſton. As their deſtination was the ſame, they ſailed in a parallel direction during great part of the voyage, very near each other; but happily for the Britiſh fleet, without knowing any thing of their proximity. To complete this good fortune, a violent ſtorm aroſe, which diſperſed the French ſquadron, and drove it to ſuch a diſtance,

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as prevented its falling in with the fleet under Commodore Hotham. He arrived ſafely at Barbadoes, and joined Admiral Barrington, before the Count D'Eſtaing had reached any of the iſlands.

It was immediately determined to ſeize this critical opportunity, and to attack, before his arrival, the iſle of St. Lucia, lying to the north weſt of Barbadoes, and in ſight of Martinico. To this purpoſe, General Meadows, with a body of light infantry and grenadiers, was diſpatched to make a deſcent at a bay called Cul de Sac; where he landed accordingly on the thirteenth of December. The heights on the north ſide of this bay, were occupied by the Chevalier De Micoud, the French commandant of the iſland, with a body of regulars and the militia. Notwithſtanding the advantages of the ground where he was poſted, the General quickly forced him to retire with the loſs of his artillery, and ſeized upon a battery at the entrance of the harbour.

The way being thus cleared for the remainder of the forces, they landed under General Preſcot, and joining with thoſe under General Meadows, they advanced together towards the chief place in the iſland. The French commandant made the beſt defence he was able; but was obliged to retreat before the ſuperiority of force that attacked him.

As faſt as the enemy retired from their poſts, they were occupied and put in a ſtate of defence with the utmoſt expedition, as if the immediate neceſſity of taking theſe precautions had been foreſeen.

General Meadows had, by this time, taken poſſeſſion of a poſt of great importance, called Vigie, commanding the north ſide of Carenage Harbour. General Sir Henry Calder, with a ſtrong body, was ſtationed at the landing place, to preſerve the communication with the fleet. From thence he ſent ſeveral detachments to ſeize the poſts on the adja-

cent mountains that commanded the ſouth ſide of Cul de Sac Bay.

The utility of theſe meaſures appeared much ſooner than it had been imagined. Scarce had they been accompliſhed, when a large fleet was diſcovered, ſteering towards the iſland. It conſiſted of the ſquadron commanded by Count D'Eſtaing, attended by a great number of frigates, privateers, and tranſports; on board of which was embarked a force of no leſs than nine thouſand men. They were chiefly regulars, drawn from the garriſons of the French iſlands, or brought from France in his own ſhips. They had been waiting for him at Martinico, where they had been collected by the Marquis De Bouille, after his capture of Dominico, in hopes of being able, in conjunction with the troops under Count D'Eſtaing, to make a conqueſt of all, or moſt of the Britiſh iſlands, before any ſuccours could arrive for their protection.

The French Admiral was now in his way to the Grenades, with which he meant to begin his operations, when he received information of the capture of St. Lucia by the ſquadron under Admiral Barrington. This he conſidered as a welcome intelligence, as he doubted not, from his great and deciſive ſuperiority of naval and military ſtrength, to defeat, with facility, the Britiſh force at that iſland. As it was the whole of what they had in the Weſt Indies, it afforded him the higher ſatisfaction that it was collected in one place, as he flattered himſelf he ſhould have it in his power to take ſuch meaſures as would ſecure an intire capture of both the troops and ſhipping.

In this expectation he haſted with all diligence in order to come upon them before they had notice of his approach, and could have time to prepare for his reception.

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Fortunately for the Britiſh fleet, it drew towards evening as he approached the iſland; and he thought it moſt adviſable, from his ignorance of its poſition, and the general ſituation of the Britiſh forces on ſhore, to put off any attack till next day.

This afforded leiſure to Admiral Barrington to make the neceſſary diſpoſitions to encounter the enemy. The whole night was employed in warping the tranſports into the bottom of Cul de Sac Bay, where they would lie out of all danger; and in forming the ſhips of war into a line at its entrance. His ſquadron was compoſed of one ſhip of ſeventy-four guns, one of ſeventy, two of ſixty-four, two of fifty, and three frigates. On the two points of land, at the entrance of the Bay, batteries were planted.

To the north of Cul de Sac Bay, lies another called Carenage, a place much more convenient and ſecure than the former. Hither it was, upon that account, the Britiſh Admiral intended to have moved with his whole fleet, had he not been prevented by the ſudden appearance of the French.

Count D'Eſtaing, who knew the advantages of this bay, reſolved to take poſſeſſion of it, in order to prevent his being anticipated. To this purpoſe, on the next morning, he ſtood in for it with his whole fleet: but on his approach, he received ſo heavy a fire from the batteries which had been ſeized by the Britiſh troops, that he was compelled to ſheer off. His own ſhip, the Languedoc, ſuffered moſt on this occaſion. This unexpected reſiſtance at a place which they ſtill thought their own, threw the French ſquadron into much confuſion; it bore away, and remained ſome time inactive. After recovering from this ſurprize, Count D'Eſtaing bore down in a line of battle on the Britiſh ſquadron in Cul de Sac Bay. Here a warm engagement enſued; but he met with ſo firm and de-

termined a reſiſtance, that he was compelled to retire.

This firſt attack was made at eleven in the morning: it was renewed at four in the afternoon, when it laſted longer, and the French made a heavier fire than in the morning; but with no better ſucceſs: they were obliged to withdraw in great diſorder, and with no little damage.

This was a ſevere diſappointment to a man of Count D'Eſtaing's high ſpirit; and who looked upon a total defeat and capture of the Britiſh ſquadron as a certainty. On the next morning, he ſtood in again towards the bay, apparently with an intention to make a third attack; but after forming his line, and ſeemingly preparing to engage, he ſuddenly ſtood off again, and came to an anchor that evening in Gros Ilet Bay, to the north of that of Carenage,

Between this latter and the former, lies another called Choc Bay. Here the French Admiral, during the night, and in the courſe of the next morning, landed all his troops; reſolving to make a vigorous attack upon the Britiſh ſquadron from the heights in the neighbourhood of Cul de Sac Bay. He had propoſed a bombardment of the whole fleet from thoſe heights, and was advancing with all ſpeed to occupy them for that purpoſe, when he found them already poſſeſſed by the detachments under Sir Henry Calder.

Diſappointed in this expectation, he then determined to make an attempt upon the corps ſtationed under General Meadows, on the peninſula called Vigie, which forms the northern ſide of Carenage Bay. This corps had thrown up an intrenchment acroſs the iſthmus joining that peninſula to the main iſland. Count D'Eſtaing divided his army in two parts; the one to attack this intrenchment, the other to obſerve the motions of the detachments under

under Generals Grant, Preſcot, and Calder, and to prevent them from giving ſuccour to General Meadows.

The body with which he intended to aſſault the troops on the peninſula, was compoſed of the beſt ſoldiers in his army, about five thouſand in number. They marched to the attack in three columns; the right, commanded by the Count D'Eſtaing; the center, by an officer of the celebrated name of Lovendal; and the left, by the Marquis De Bouille. The corps under General Meadows did not exceed thirteen hundred men; but they were a part of thoſe intrepid troops that had ſo greatly ſignalized themſelves in America.

As the French advanced to the attack, their flanks lay expoſed to the fire of ſeveral batteries, which had been erected on that ſide of Carenage Bay which is oppoſite to the peninſula. They preſſed onwards with great ſpirit and impetuoſity. The Britiſh troops, according to orders, permitted them to come up to the very intrenchments without firing; when they made a heavy and well-directed diſcharge that did moſt dreadful execution. They then received them at the point of the bayonet. Notwithſtanding the French continued the aſſault with the moſt undaunted reſolution, they were repulſed every where with terrible ſlaughter, and obliged to retire at ſome diſtance to recover themſelves.

They then returned to the charge with no leſs intrepidity than before; and were again received with the ſame cool and determined courage: the ſlaughter was renewed, and they were again thrown into diſorder, and compelled to withdraw.

Not diſcouraged by this ſecond repulſe, they rallied, and made a third charge; but the deſtruction made in the two firſt, had ſo weakened them, that they were ſoon broken, and thrown into ſuch confuſion, that they could ſtand their ground no longer,

longer, and were forced to make a retreat with the utmoſt precipitation.

They were ſo completely defeated, that they left their dead and wounded in the field of battle, and were obliged to aſk permiſſion to inter the firſt, and carry off the laſt, which was granted them, on condition theſe ſhould be conſidered as priſoners.

The conduct of General Meadows on this memorable day, diſplayed ſuch profeſſional ability, as obtained him the higheſt commendation both of friends and enemies. It was acknowledged by the French officers, that they had never been witneſſes of a more able and ſoldier-like defence. Nor was his perſonal bravery leſs conſpicuous: he received a wound in the very commencement of the action; but would neither withdraw, nor ſuffer it to be dreſſed, till it was entirely over.

The loſs of the French, in killed and wounded, amounted to no leſs than fifteen hundred men, by their own acccount. This exceeded the number of thoſe they attacked by two hundred. It ſhews, that though they were repulſed, it was not till they had made every effort of which valiant ſoldiers are capable. A proof of the eagerneſs and determination with which they made their attack, was, that ſeventy of their grenadiers were killed within the intrenchments in the firſt charge.

Some of the very beſt troops in the Britiſh and French ſervice were engaged on this day. It is no exaggeration to ſay, that thoſe who came from America had not their ſuperiors in the world. Thoſe whom Count D'Eſtaing brought from France, were known to be choſen men. They both ſuſtained the military reputation of their reſpective countries, in a manner that reflected equal honour upon both. The attack and defence were conducted with a magnanimity and contempt of danger worthy of the high-ſpirited character of both nations.

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The expectations of the French and Americans had been raiſed ſo high upon this occaſion, that they entertained no doubt of the total deſtruction of the Britiſh military and naval power, and the conſequent reduction of every iſland they poſſeſſed in the Weſt Indies.

Elate with theſe hopes, a croud of French and American privateers had joined Count D'Eſtaing from various quarters, and were hourly encreaſing, with the view of partaking in the conqueſt and the ſpoil.

Certain it is, that notwithſtanding the great loſs he had ſuſtained in the late action, he had a formidable force ſtill remaining. Beſides his ſquadron of twelve ſhips of the line, he had now ten frigates, and ſeveral other ſhips of force; and his land forces were much more numerous than the Britiſh troops on the iſland.

With theſe advantages, he made no further attempt for its recovery, though he remained aſhore during the ſpace of ten days after the engagement. From this inaction, the Britiſh commanders began to imagine that his intention was to form a blockade, with a view to cut off ſupplies, and compel them to ſurrender for want of proviſions; but to their great aſtoniſhment, he embarked his troops in the night of the twenty-eighth of December, and ſailed to Martinico on the following day.

As ſoon as Count D'Eſtaing had left the iſland, the commandant, and principal inhabitants, deſired to capitulate. The favourable terms granted to the inhabitants of Dominico, induced the Britiſh commanders to act with the ſame ſpirit of indulgence and moderation. The conditions were ſuch as the inhabitants had every motive to be ſatisfied with, conſidering they were entirely at the diſcretion of the enemy: but they were dictated by that ſpirit of emulation not to be outdone in courteſy and generoſity,

fity, which has of late years ſo honourably characterized the reciprocal conduct of the Britiſh and French nations in the midſt of their hoſtilities.

This was the ſecond diſappointment the French Admiral had met with, contrary to his own and the general expectation, which was certainly well founded. But thoſe who had formed ſuch ſanguine hopes from his enterprifing diſpoſition, and the force he carried out with him, did not ſufficiently conſider the men he would have to contend with both by ſea and land. They were ſuch as ſeemed peculiarly fitted for the arduous taſks which the difficulty of the times impoſed upon them, and happily for their country, were completely qualified to face thoſe many trials in which its unpropitious deſtiny had now involved it ſo univerſally.

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

Proceedings in England.—Tranſactions at Sea.

1778.

GREAT Britain was now placed in ſuch a ſituation as ſhe had not experienced during the courſe of many centuries: ſhe was now alone, and unaſſiſted, to contend with the greateſt power in Europe, while on the other ſide of the Atlantic, ſhe had to combat with the united ſtrength of her Colonies. In this perilous conteſt, ſhe had not only theſe avowed and open enemies to reſiſt, but the ſecret enmity of almoſt all Europe to counteract.

But what chiefly aggravated the calamity of her ſituation, was the domeſtic diſunion under which ſhe laboured more than at any other period ſince the civil wars during the laſt century. The kingdom was full of diſcontent, and the parties that oppoſed each other, did it with a virulence and acrimony that ſeemed to threaten it would at laſt terminate in actual violence.

In this embarraſſed and diſtracted ſtate was the Britiſh nation when the French miniſtry took up arms in favour of America. The eyes of all Europe were now turned upon this iſland; ſome with an anxious curioſity to behold by what means ſhe would extricate herſelf out of ſuch a complication of difficulties, but moſt with a ſecret deſire to ſee her cruſhed beneath the weight of the burthens and hardſhips that fate ſeemed to have aſſigned to this period of her exiſtence.

The war ſhe had been waging with her Colonies, had, in the ideas of her numerous enemies, nearly exhauſted her reſources. To the enormous debt which

which the proſecution of the preceding war had ſo largely contributed to accumulate, ſhe had in the courſe of no more than three years hoſtilities on the continent of North America, added the immenſe ſum of between thirty and forty millions. In what manner ſhe would be able to continue ſuch ruinous expences, on the acceſſion of the formidable enemy ſhe would have to encounter, was a matter not eaſy to conceive. It was looked upon as impracticable by her enemies, and it was from that perſuaſion they were forming thoſe clandeſtine confederacies, through which they flattered themſelves to overwhelm her at once, and put a final and deciſive period to that power of which their jealouſy had ſo long envied her the poſſeſſion.

What induced numbers throughout the European nations to look upon her ruin as inevitable, was the very greatneſs of her ſpirit, and the inflexibility with which it was apprehended ſhe would perſiſt in maintaining her ground againſt all her foes. It was impoſſible, in their opinion, thus aſſaulted from ſo many quarters, that ſhe would be able to bear, much leſs to repel the blows that would be given her by ſuch powerful adverſaries. They concluded, of courſe, that after a valiant, but fruitleſs reſiſtance, ſhe would ſink under the repeated efforts of ſuch a potent combination, and be reduced to a ſtate of humility and weakneſs, unprecedented in her hiſtory, ſince the formation of her various parts into one kingdom.

Her ſituation was ſingular in various reſpects; ſhe was divided at home; ſhe was engaged in war with a large body of her own ſubjects, in another part of the world; her ancient enemies were preparing to attack her at her own doors, and ſhe had not a ſingle ally.

The means of facing this multiplicity of trials, were not, however, ſo much wanting as it was generally appre-

apprehended abroad. The commerce of the nation ſtill continued to flouriſh, in deſpite of all obſtructions; the circulation of buſineſs at home retained nearly its uſual activity, and the revenue was but little impaired.

The great deficiency was that of unanimity. The nation abounded in men of the moſt eminent abilities, but they differed in almoſt every point that was brought into diſcuſſion. Without enquiring into the motives that led them to oppoſe each other with ſuch inflexible violence, it was certainly to this unhappy diſpoſition of the times one may ſafely attribute the readineſs with which all the enemies of Britain confederated againſt her.

The nation at large called for unanimity in their rulers; and without adverting to former errors, were warm in their deſires and requiſitions for a revival of that ſpirit, and thoſe exertions, which had always characteriſed it in times of danger. They ſeemed to be willing to overlook all paſt miſconduct, on condition of acting henceforth with vigour and deciſion, and of ſhowing the enemies that were threatening the kingdom on every ſide, that it was able to make head againſt all their efforts.

The very greatneſs and diffuſion of the enmity profeſſed againſt this country, inſtead of depreſſing the ſpirit of its inhabitants, ſeemed, on the contrary, to have raiſed it to a higher pitch than uſual. The naval claſſes, eſpecially, were animated with the firmeſt hopes of riſing ſuperior to all the endeavours of the foe to overcome them on their own element.

Various were the meaſures ſaid to be in conſultation at this critical period. The detaching of America from France, was, as being the moſt deſirable, obviouſly the chief. But the commiſſion appointed for that purpoſe, afforded little expectation of ſucceſs. When it was reflected, that France offered whatever America could demand, either for the ſecurity

curity of her independence, or the advantages of her commerce, the terms ſent out by the Commiſſioners appeared totally inadequate to the procuring of a reconciliation.

An acknowledgment of this independence would indiſputably have been a ſure and ready method of terminating all differences. But a meaſure of this nature was inadmiſſible in a great and high-ſpirited nation. Doubtleſs it would have been attended with very beneficial conſequences, and ſaved this nation many lives, and immenſe treaſures; but thoſe who propoſed it could not deny, that it would injure that reputation of courage and magnanimity, for which the Britiſh nation had ſo long been renowned.

This meaſure was therefore rejected as inglorious, and unworthy of the councils of this kingdom.—The proffers made to the Americans were adjudged reaſonable; they placed them upon the ſame footing as the people of this country; nothing more, in juſtice, could be deſired; if they were refuſed, it would ſhow they were determined, at all events, upon a total ſeparation. Were this to be the caſe, Britain could not abſolutely ſubſcribe paſſively to ſuch a treatment without infamy. Her honour would then require that ſhe ſhould ſtrive with her utmoſt might to reduce her refractory ſubjects on the one hand, and to obtain reparation on the other, from thoſe who had inſulted her ſo glaringly as to aſſume their patronage and protection.

It was during ſome time, in contemplation to deviſe ſome expedient to induce France to abandon the Colonies, and obſerve a ſtrict neutrality; but this ſoon appeared a forlorn hope. Great Britain had no inducement of ſufficient weight to prevail upon France to relinquiſh the ſyſtem ſhe had purſued with ſo much ſteadineſs ever ſince the breaking out of hoſtilities in America. No inducement, indeed,

deed, could in the nature of things, prove an equivalent to the diſmemberment of the Britiſh empire. The French knew their intereſt too well, to depart from the meaſures which they had ſo ſucceſsfully accompliſhed. It was now become their principal ſtudy to prevent Great Britain from undoing what they had been ſo ſolicitous to bring about, and the completion of which was conſidered as the greateſt blow that could poſſibly have befallen their ancient and moſt formidable rival.

The honour and perſonal character of thoſe who directed the affairs of France, were no leſs deeply concerned in adhering to the engagements formed with the Americans. In this matter, both the reputation and intereſt of that kingdom were too cloſely bound together, to diſcover the leaſt glimpſe of any method of drawing them out of the track they had hitherto ſo advantageouſly purſued.

In this ſeaſon of danger, the City of London approached the throne with an addreſs upon the uncertain and alarming ſituation of public affairs: the ſtile of it was equally elegant and pathetic. It recapitulated with great force, the unhappy meaſures by which the nation had been gradually brought to its preſent difficulties; it expreſſed ſtrong apprehenſions of the inefficacy of the conceſſions that were intended to be tranſmitted to America, but ſtill recommended the moſt earneſt attention and endeavours to put as ſpeedy an end as poſſible to ſo calamitous a conteſt.

It was not only the deſire of the City of London, but of all the realm, to ſee the termination of this unfortunate quarrel. But all expectations of this kind were becoming daily more fruitleſs. A few days after the French ambaſſador had ſignified the acknowledgment of the independency of America on the part of France, orders were iſſued by that Court for the ſeizure of all the Britiſh veſſels in the ports of that kingdom. This was done in conſe-

quence of the meſſage ſent from the King to both Houſes of Parliament on receiving that notification, and of the addreſſes which that meſſage had produced.

Theſe orders were followed by others of a ſimilar kind in England; but little damage accrued to the mercantile intereſt on either ſide of the water. As an approaching rupture was equally ſuſpected in both countries, the commercial intercourſe between them had much decreaſed, and there were few trading veſſels employed reciprocally by either.

But an event which decided at once the neceſſity of embracing the moſt vigorous meaſures, was the determination taken at the Court of France, to recogniſe in due form, and in the face of all Europe, the ſovereignty of the United States of America. This was done by giving a public audience at Verſailles to the three American Deputies who had negociated and ſigned about a month before, the treaties of alliance and commerce between France and the Britiſh Colonies: theſe were Doctor Franklin, whoſe name, long before well known in Europe, was now become more celebrated than ever. The ſecond in this commiſſion was Mr. Silas Deane, a gentleman of acknowledged abilities; and the third was Mr. Arthur Lee, who had ſo ably ſupported the cauſe of his countrymen in England, under the ſignature of *Junius Americanus*.

They were received by the King of France in quality of Ambaſſadors from the United States of America. They were introduced to his preſence with all the formalities uſual on ſuch occaſions, and they were treated with the ſame reſpect and honours that are paid to the Ambaſſadors of crowned heads. This memorable event took place on the twenty-firſt day of March, one thouſand ſeven hundred and ſeventy-eight.

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A tranſaction of this nature was too mortifying to the Court of Great Britain, for that of France to doubt in what manner the news of it would be received. Senſible what the conſequences muſt neceſſarily prove, it immediately turned its whole attention to the arrangement of thoſe vaſt preparations it had been making with an eye to thoſe meaſures they were now to ſupport.

In England, war now evidently appeared the only object in univerſal contemplation. The conduct of France left no alternative. Her coaſts were lined with troops, and her harbours were filled with ſhips of war, and the wiſhes of the whole French nation ſeemed unanimous for a trial with Britain which of the two countries ſhould enjoy the ſovereignty of the ſea.

The militia were now drawn out and embodied through all the counties in England. Encampments were formed, where equal proportions of the regular troops were intermixed with them; the utmoſt care and aſſiduity were exerted to inure them to the ſtricteſt diſcipline; they were kept in conſtant exerciſe and practice of all that could be learned of the ſcience of war, ſhort of real action. The proficiency they made was aſtoniſhing; expert judges were of opinion, that thoſe officers and ſoldiers among the regulars excepted, who had ſeen actual ſervice, the militia were in no wiſe inferior to them.

Still, however, the nation placed its principal reliance on its ancient and natural defence, its navy and ſeamen. It was with much concern they beheld that great bulwark of the kingdom in a far leſs flouriſhing ſtate than the criticalneſs of the times demanded. The indiſpenſible neceſſity of providing for the immediate preſervation of the army in America, and the diſtant poſſeſſions of Britain, had occaſioned a dimunition of its naval force at home, which enabled the enemy to appear in the

Channel with a confidence to which they were little uſed.

The Parliamentary complaints of the neglect of the navy, were now renewed by the people throughout the whole kingdom. The national pride could not with patience endure the ſight of any equality at ſea in that enemy whom ſo much blood and treaſure had been profuſed to reduce to an inferiority. Never, it was aſſerted, had this iſland ſtood in ſo much need of a powerful naval force; and never had it on the eve of any war, been found in ſuch a ſtate of weakneſs upon that element, without the command of which it could not pretend to be in any real ſecurity.

Happily, the commanders to which the fleet was to be entruſted, were men of acknowledged bravery and experience. The chief in command was Admiral Keppel, an officer who had ſerved with great diſtinction, and acquired uncommon reputation during the laſt war. Admirals Sir Robert Harland, and Sir Hugh Palliſer, ſerved under him, both of them officers of undoubted courage and capacity.

Arriving at Portſmouth towards the end of March, Admiral Keppel exerted himſelf with ſo much induſtry and diligence, that excluſive of thoſe ſhips which it was found neceſſary to diſpatch to the coaſt of North America under Admiral Byron, a fleet of twenty ſail of the line was got in complete readineſs by the beginning of June, and ten more in a forward ſtate of preparation.

At the head of this fleet, Admiral Keppel ſailed from Portſmouth on the thirteenth of June, in order to protect the return home of the vaſt number of commercial ſhipping expected from all parts of the world, and at the ſame time to watch the motions of the French fleet at Breſt.

France had been at an immenſe care and expence in its naval preparations at this port. They were ſuch


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ſuch as left no doubt that ſhe had ſome great object in immediate contemplation. The province of Britanny, in which that port is ſituated, was full of troops, and a large quantity of tranſports were in readineſs in the ſeveral harbours around its coaſt.

On the arrival of the Britiſh fleet off the coaſt of France, two French frigates approached it, in order to make their obſervations. Notwithſtanding no formal declaration of war had taken place, yet the hoſtile circumſtances both kingdoms were in towards each other, ſuperſeded all conſiderations of that nature, and the neceſſity of obtaining intelligence of the ſtrength and poſition of the enemy, rendered it indiſpenſible to ſtop them.

Theſe two frigates were the Licorne, of thirty-two guns, and the Belle Poule, of twenty-ſix. In conſequence of a ſignal to give chace, the Milford frigate overtook the Licorne towards the cloſe of the day, and requeſted the French Captain to come under the Britiſh Admiral's ſtern; upon his refuſal, a ſhip of the line came up, and compelled him to come into the fleet.

Next morning, the Licorne ſeeming by her motions to be altering her courſe, a ſhot was fired acroſs her way, as a ſignal for keeping it. Hereupon, ſhe diſcharged a broadſide, and a volley of ſmall-arms into the America, of ſixty-four guns, that lay cloſe to her, and immediately ſtruck. The behaviour of the French Captain was the more aſtoniſhing, as Lord Longford, Captain of the America, was at that inſtant engaged in converſation with him, in terms of ſuch civility, as excluded all ideas of ſuch treatment. The roughneſs of this behaviour was not however returned, though it certainly merited a ſevere chaſtiſement.

The Arethuſa frigate, of twenty-ſix guns, commanded by Captain Marſhal, with the Alert cutter, was mean while in purſuit of the Belle Poule, that

was alſo accompanied by a ſchooner. He purſued the French frigate till they were both out of ſight of the fleet. On his coming up, he informed the French Captain of his orders to bring him to the Admiral, and requeſted his compliance.—This being refuſed, the Arethuſa fired a ſhot acroſs the Belle Poule, which ſhe returned with a diſchage of her broadſide. The engagement thus begun, continued more than two hours, with uncommon warmth and fury. It being the firſt action of a war, which both parties looked upon as the moſt important and deciſive that had ever been waged between the two nations at ſea, they equally exerted all their ſkill and valour, in order to obtain the honour of being victorious in this firſt trial.

The Belle Poule was greatly ſuperior not only in number, (a ſuperiority the French always have) but in the weight of her metal: her guns were all twelve-pounders; thoſe of the Arethuſa only ſix: Notwithſtanding this inferiority, ſhe maintained ſo deſperate a fight, that the French frigate ſuffered a much greater loſs of men than the Engliſh. The ſlain and wounded on board the former, amounted, by their own account, to near one hundred; on board the latter, they were not half that proportion.

Captain Fairfax, in the Alert, during the engagement between the two frigates, attacked the French ſchooner, which being of much the ſame force, the diſpute continued two hours with great bravery on both ſides, when ſhe ſtruck to the Engliſh cutter.

The Arethuſa received ſo much damage, that ſhe became almoſt unmanageable: the Captain endeavoured to put her into ſuch a poſition, as to continue the engagement; but was unable to do it. Being at the ſame time upon the enemy's coaſt, and cloſe on the ſhore, the danger of grounding in ſuch a ſituation, obliged him to act with the more caution,

as

as it was midnight. The Belle Poule, in the mean time, ſtood into a ſmall bay, ſurrounded with rocks, where ſhe was protected from all attacks: ſhe had ſuffered ſo much, that the Captain, apprehending that ſhe could not ſtand another engagement, had reſolved, in caſe he found himſelf in danger of one, to run her aground; but her ſituation prevented any ſuch attempt; and as ſoon as it was daylight, a number of boats came out from ſhore, and towed her into a place of ſafety.

Such was the iſſue of the firſt engagement of this war. It took place on the ſeventeenth of June. Notwithſtanding the evident and great ſuperiority on the ſide of the French, this action was extolled by them as a proof of ſingular bravery, and the account of it received with as much triumph, as if it had been a victory. All France reſounded with the praiſes of the officers and company of the Belle Poule, and repreſented them as men who had retrieved the honour of France, ſo much impaired at ſea by the defeats of the laſt war.

The Court of France was too prudent not to countenance this general enthuſiaſm. Rewards and promotions were beſtowed on the commander and officers of the Belle Poule; the widows and families of thoſe who had fallen in that action, were liberally penſioned, as well as the wounded; and a pecuniary gratification was diſtributed among the ſeamen.

It was thought a neceſſary policy in the beginning of a war of ſuch importance, to hold out conſiderable rewards to thoſe who ſignalized themſelves. The royal munificence on this occaſion, was extremely well-timed among a people, who exceed all others in the alacrity with which they enter upon any enterprize that is accompanied with ſplendor. It excited an emulation among all the naval claſſes in France, that continued throughout the whole war. The effects of it were viſible in that improvement

of their naval ſkilfulneſs, which became obſervable in a degree unprecedented in any former period.

On the eighteenth of June, the day following the engagement with the Belle Poule, another frigate fell in with the Britiſh fleet; and was captured by the Admiral's orders, on account of the behaviour of the Licorne. Yet he did not think himſelf authoriſed to detain their merchantmen. Several of them paſſed through his fleet unmoleſted, notwithſtanding a report was prevalent, and generally credited as not being ill founded, that the frigates he had ſeized, were, together with the Belle Poule, ſent out to cruize, in order to intercept the trade from the Straits, with that from Spain and Portugal, amounting to near eighty ſail, and which were at that time hourly expected in thoſe latitudes, on their return homewards.

The capture of theſe French frigates produced ſuch intelligence to the Admiral, as proved of the utmoſt importance, at the ſame time that it was highly alarming. He was informed that the fleet at Breſt conſiſted of thirty-two ſhips of the line, and twelve frigates. This was in every reſpect a moſt fortunate diſcovery, as he had no more with him than twenty ſhips of the line, and three frigates. The ſuperiority of the enemy being ſuch, as neither ſkill nor courage could oppoſe in his preſent circumſtances; and as the conſeqences of a defeat muſt have been fatal to this country, he thought himſelf bound in prudence, to return to Portſmouth for a reinforcement.

He arrived at this port on the twenty-ſeventh of June, and remained there till the ſhips from the Mediterranean, and the Spaniſh and Portugueſe trade, and the ſummer fleet from the Weſt Indies coming home, brought him a ſupply of ſeamen, and enabled him to put to ſea again, with an addition of ten ſhips of the line. But ſtill there was a great deficiency

deficiency of frigates, owing to the great numbers that were on the American ſtation, and the neceſſity of manning the ſhips of the line preferably to all others.

The Court of France did not fail to repreſent the engagement between the Belle Poule and the Arethuſa, and the ſeizure of the other frigates, as a breach of the peace on the ſide of Great Britain. Orders were accordingly iſſued out for making repriſals on the ſhipping of Great Britain; and to encourage the ſeafaring claſſes, a new regulation in regard to the diſtribttion of prize-money was publiſhed throughout France, more favourable to the generality than thoſe that had been formerly obſerved.

France having thus proceeded to every length that could be done, it was judged neceſſary in England to follow her example, by making the ſame arrangements as uſual in the caſe of captures, and iſſuing letters of marque.

In the mean time, the preparations at Breſt being fully completed, the French fleet put to ſea on the eighth of July. It conſiſted of thirty-two ſail of the line, beſides a large number of frigates. Count D'Orvilliers commanded in chief. The other principal officers in this fleet, were Counts Duchaffault, De Guichen, and De Graſſe; Monſieur De Rochechoart, and Monſieur De la Motte Piquet. In order to animate the fleet, and to ſhew the greatneſs of the objects propoſed by the war, and how much it relied on the courage and exertions of its officers and people, the Court had ſent a Prince of the blood royal to ſerve on board of this fleet; this was the Duke of Chartres, ſon and heir to the Duke of Orleans, firſt Prince of the blood royal of France in the collateral line. He commanded one of the diviſions of this fleet in quality of Admiral.

On

On the ninth day of July, the Britiſh fleet ſailed out of Portſmouth in three diviſions; the firſt commanded by Sir Robert Harland, the third by Sir Hugh Palliſer, and the center by Admiral Keppel, accompanied by Admiral Campbell, an officer of great courage and merit.

The French had been informed that the Britiſh fleet was greatly inferior to their own; which was but too true at the time when they received this information. Being yet unapprized of the reinforcement it was returned with, the French Admiral ſailed at firſt in queſt of it, intending to attack it while in the weak condition it had been repreſented to him.

As the Britiſh Admiral was equally intent on coming to action as ſoon as poſſible, they were not long before they met. On the twenty third of July, they came in ſight. But the appearance of the Britiſh ſhips ſoon convinced the French Admiral of his miſtake, and he immediately determined to avoid an engagement no leſs cautiouſly, than he had eagerly ſought it before.

Herein he was favoured by the approach of night: All the Britiſh Admiral could do on his ſide, was to form the line of battle in expectation the enemy would do the ſame. During the night, the wind changed ſo favourably for the French, as to give them the weather gage. This putting the choice of coming to action, or of declining it, intirely in their own power, deprived the Britiſh Admiral of the opportunity of forcing them to engage, as he had propoſed.

There ſtill remained ſome hopes of compaſſing this purpoſe. A gale had ariſen during the night, which blew ſo freſh, as partly to diſperſe the French fleet: two of their capital ſhips were driven ſo far to leeward, that they could not come up with the main

main body. The Britiſh Admiral, who now plainly perceived that the enemy was ſtudious to avoid him, reſolved to avail himſelf of the ſituation of theſe two ſhips, to bring on a general engagement.

To this intent, he made his utmoſt efforts to cut off, and capture theſe ſhips, not doubting the French Admiral would give him battle ſooner than ſubmit to ſo great a loſs, without endeavouring to prevent it: but ſuch was the fixed determination to riſk no general action, that the two French ſhips were left wholly to extricate themſelves by their own exertions. They had the good fortune to eſcape; but they were not able to effect a re-junction with the French fleet; which, by the ſeparation of theſe two, was reduced to an equality in point of number, to the ſhips of the line in the Britiſh fleet.

During the ſpace of four days, the French had the option of coming to action; but conſtantly exerted their utmoſt care and induſtry to avoid it. The Britiſh fleet continued the whole time beating up againſt the wind, evidently with a reſolution to attack them. But notwithſtanding the vigour and ſkill manifeſted in this purſuit, the Britiſh Admiral had the mortification to ſee his endeavours continually eluded by the vigilance and precaution of the enemy not to loſe the leaſt advantage that wind and weather could afford.

The motives which influenced the French to decline coming to action, were the daily expectation of a ſtrong reinforcement, both of ſhips of the line and frigates, and the hope of intercepting, by means of theſe latter, the commercial fleets which muſt paſs through the track they were ſtationed in, on their way to the Britiſh ports. A defeat would have fruſtrated all theſe hopes, and put an end at once to all endeavours of this kind, by obliging the French

French to recal thoſe frigates, as they would no longer retain the power of protecting them.

The Britiſh Admiral was thoroughly aware of theſe motives, and laboured of courſe with all his might, to compel them to an engagement; wherein, if unſucceſsful, they would be deprived of thoſe advantages, of which they muſt unavoidably remain in poſſeſſion, at any rate, till that could be brought about.

The poſition of the French fleet was, at this time, ſo critical, that no time was to be loſt in forcing them to alter it. From the multitude of their frigates, they occupied an immenſe track of ſea, and formed a chain that guarded, as it were, all the avenues to the coaſt of Britain.

In the mean time, the periodical return of two fleets from the Weſt India iſlands, and of as many from the Eaſt Indies, was now looked for. The loſs of theſe, or a part of them, would have proved a grievous blow from their immenſe value, and the number of ſeamen they had on board.

All theſe were powerful reaſons to urge the Britiſh Admiral to the moſt unremitting purſuit of the French fleet. But being to windward, and cautiouſly maintaining the weather gage, the French ſtill continued to defeat all his endeavours, and to keep at ſuch a diſtance, as made it impracticable to purſue them to any effect, while the wind continued in the preſent quarter, and they remained as unwilling to be approached.

The chace laſted in this manner, till the twenty-ſeventh of July. Between ten and eleven in the morning, an alteration of wind and weather occaſioned ſeveral motions in both fleets, that brought them, unintentionally on the part of the French, and chiefly through the dexterous management of the Britiſh Admiral, ſo near each other, that it was no longer in their power to decline an engagement.

This

This was ſo repugnant to the intent of the French, that they neglected nothing to diſappoint the hopes now entertained, of bringing them unavoidably to action. As they could not defeat this hope intirely, they reſolved, however, to fruſtrate it in part, by engaging in ſuch a manner, as ſhould leave the conteſt undecided.

Both fleets were now on the ſame tack: had they ſo remained, the Britiſh fleet on coming up with the French, would have had an opportunity of a fair engagement, ſhip to ſhip; which would hardly have failed of proving very deciſive. But this was a manner of combating quite contrary to the wiſhes of the French Admiral. Inſtead of receiving the Britiſh fleet in this poſition, as ſoon as he found that an action muſt enſue, he directly put his ſhips on the contrary tack, that ſailing in oppoſite directions, they might only fire at, as they paſſed by each other. By this means a cloſe and ſide-long action would be effectually evaded.

Having taken this reſolution, which it was utterly out of the Britiſh Admiral's power to defeat, as ſoon as the van of the Britiſh fleet, conſiſting of Sir Robert Harland's diviſion, came up, they directed their fire upon it; but at too great a diſtance to make any impreſſion: the fire was not returned by the Britiſh ſhips, on the other hand, till they came cloſe up to the enemy, and were ſure of doing execution. In this manner they all paſſed cloſe along-ſide of each other, in oppoſite directions, making a very heavy and deſtructive fire.

The center diviſion of the Britiſh line, having paſſed the rearmoſt ſhips of the enemy, the firſt care of the Admiral was to effect a renewal of the engagement, as ſoon as the ſhips of the different fleets, yet in action, had got clear of each other reſpectively. Sir Robert Harland, with ſome of the ſhips of his diviſion, had already tacked, and ſtood to-

wards the French; but the remaining part of the fleet had not yet tacked, and ſome were dropped to leeward, and repairing the damages they had received in the action. His own ſhip, the Victory, had ſuffered too much to tack about inſtantly; and had he done it, he would have thrown the ſhips aſtern of him into diſorder.

As ſoon as it was practicable, however, the Victory wore, and ſteered again upon the enemy, before any other ſhip of the center diviſion; of which not above three or four were able to do the ſame. The other ſhips not having recovered their ſtations, near enough to ſupport each other, on a renewal of action, in order to collect them more readily for that purpoſe, he made the ſignal for the line of battle a-head.

It was now three in the afternoon; but the ſhips of the Britiſh fleet had not ſufficiently regained their ſtations to engage. The Victory lay neareſt the enemy, with the four ſhips above-mentioned, and ſeven more of Sir Robert Harland's diviſion. Theſe twelve were the only ſhips in any condition for immediate ſervice; of the others belonging to the center, and to Sir Robert Harland's diviſion, three were a great way a-ſtern, and five at a conſiderable diſtance to leeward, much diſabled in their rigging.

Sir Hugh Palliſer, who commanded the rear diviſion during the time of action, in which he behaved with ſignal bravery, came of courſe the laſt out of it; and in conſequence of the Admiral's ſignal for the line, was to have led the van on renewing the fight; but his diviſion was upon a contrary tack, and was entirely out of the line.

The French, on the other hand, expecting directly to be re-attacked, had cloſed together in tacking, and were now ſpreading themſelves into a line of battle. On diſcovering the poſition of the Britiſh ſhips that were fallen to leeward, they immediately

ſtood

ſtood towards them, in order to cut them off. This obliged the Admiral to wear and to ſteer athwart the enemy's foremoſt diviſion, in order to ſecure them; directing, at the ſame time, Sir Robert Harland to form his diviſion in a line a-ſtern, in order to face the enemy, till Sir Hugh Palliſer could come up, and enable him to act more effectually.

The Admiral, in moving to the protection of the leeward ſhips, was now drawing near the enemy. As Sir Hugh Palliſer ſtill continued to windward, he made a ſignal for all the ſhips in that poſition to come into his wake: Sir Hugh Palliſer repeated this ſignal; but it was unluckily miſtaken by the ſhips of his diviſion, as an order to come into his own wake, which they did accordingly; but as he ſtill remained in his poſition, they retained theirs of courſe.

This non-compliance with the Admiral's ſignals, was unfortunately occaſioned by the diſabled condition of ſome of the ſhips in Sir Hugh Palliſer's diviſion. His own ſhip, the Formidable, had ſuffered ſo ſeverely in the engagement, as to be at the preſent time abſolutely unfit for action, and almoſt unmanageable.

In the mean time, the Admiral having effectually ſecured the ſhips to leeward, and the French having formed their line, it was neceſſary that he ſhould exert himſelf with all ſpeed for the formation of his own. Sir Robert Harland was directed to take his ſtation a-head, and the ſignal repeated for Sir Hugh Palliſer's diviſion to come into his wake; but this ſignal was not complied with, any more than a verbal meſſage to that purpoſe, and other ſubſequent ſignal's for that diviſion's coming into its ſtation in the line, before it was too late to re-commence any operations againſt the enemy.

The French continued drawn up in order of battle, but did not ſhow any inclination to renew the attack themſelves, meaning no more than to act upon

upon the defenſive, though they had it in their power to engage whenever they thought proper during the whole courſe of the day. In the night, they took the determination to put it wholly out of the power of the Britiſh fleet to attack them a ſecond time. To this purpoſe, three of their ſwifteſt ſailing veſſels were fixed in the ſtations occupied during the day by the three Admiral ſhips of the reſpective diviſions, with lights at the maſt-heads, to deceive the Britiſh fleet into the belief that the French fleet kept its poſition, with an intent to fight it next morning. Protected by this ſtratagem, the remainder of the French fleet drew off unperceived and unſuſpected during the night, and retired with all ſpeed towards Breſt: they continued this retreat the whole courſe of the following day, and entered that port in the evening.

The diſcovery of this departure was not made till break of day; but it was too late to purſue them, as they were only diſcernible from the maſt-heads of the largeſt ſhips in the Britiſh fleet. The three ſhips that had remained with the lights, were purſued; but the veſſels that chaced them were ſo unable to overtake them, from the damages they had received in the preceding day's engagement, that they were quickly recalled from the purſuit.

In the mean time, the ſituation of the Britiſh fleet did not allow it to keep its preſent ſtation, with any reaſonable hope of making an impreſſion on the enemy, whoſe ſhips, though conſiderably damaged in their hulls, had ſuffered much leſs in their ſails and rigging, and conſequently could move with much greater ſpeed.

This conſideration induced the Admiral to make the beſt of his way to Plymouth, as being the neareſt port, in order to put his fleet into a proper condition to return in queſt of the enemy.

The

The killed and wounded on board the Britiſh fleet in this memorable action, amounted to ſomewhat more than five hundred: but the French, it has been aſſerted, on grounds of great credibility, loſt near three thouſand; this appears the leſs improbable, from the conſideration that the French, in all their naval engagements, aim principally at the maſts and rigging, and the Engliſh chiefly at the body of the ſhips.

Notwithſtanding it was clear beyond a doubt, that the French retired from the field of battle in order to evade another engagement, yet the utmoſt pains were taken by the French miniſtry to perſuade the people that they had obtained a victory; but the means they employed to palliate their flight into Breſt, were too weak and futile to impoſe even upon their beſt wiſhers in Europe.

A circumſtance in this action, which was not called in queſtion, was, that the French officers and ſailors diſplayed a degree of ſkill and ſeamanſhip in the management of their veſſels, which the oldeſt perſons in the Britiſh fleet declared they had never ſeen any example of before among the French.—Various were the cauſes to which theſe improvements in naval matters were attributed; but the moſt natural is, the uncommon attention and aſſiduity beſtowed upon their marine by thoſe who preſided over it, from their foreſeeing how neceſſary it would be in the proſecution of thoſe deſigns which were become the principal objects of their politics.

Such was the iſſue of the fight between the Britiſh and the French fleet, on the twenty-ſeventh of July, ſeventy-eight. Admiral Keppel hoped to have made it "a proud day to England"; ſuch were his own words: but from a variety of cauſes, equally needleſs and odious to mention, it proved the ſource of a moſt fatal contention, which filled

the nation with complaints and jealouſies, and excited animoſities that are not even extinct at this day.

The ſkill and valour diſplayed on the ſide of the Britiſh officers and ſeamen in this engagement, was remarkable. They ſought the enemy, and attacked them under many diſadvantages. The French fleet was cloſe and compact, and drawn up in ſuch a manner, as to enable every ſhip to be well ſupported; the Britiſh fleet, on the contrary, from the determination of the enemy not to engage without compulſion, was obliged to bear down upon them in detached and unconnected parts, expoſed to a great ſuperiority of fire. Under ſuch circumſtances, nothing but an uncommon degree of profeſſional abilities, and extraordinary exertions of courage, could have overcome the difficulties under which they laboured, and obtained thoſe advantages of which the French were but too conſcious. Their ſeizing the very firſt opportunity that offered to make a retreat, together with the ſolicitude and ſpeed with which they effected it, made it manifeſt how much they dreaded theſe advantages, would, on a ſecond engagement, have been improved into a complete victory.

Admiral Keppel having taken the determination to return home, for the purpoſe of repairing the damages of his fleet, left a ſufficient ſtrength to guard the entrance of the Channel, and diſperſe the French frigates that had been cruiſing there previous to the action. Moſt of them left their ſtations in conſequence of it, which was a further proof how little they conſidered it in the light of any ſucceſs.

As ſoon as the Britiſh fleet was refitted, it put to ſea with the ſame intent and endeavour as before, to ſeek and engage the enemy. To this purpoſe, it took its ſtation off Breſt, to give the French

an opportunity of making good their boaſt of having defeated the Engliſh in the preceding fight. But the French fleet kept the ſame diſtance as before, and as ſtudiouſly ſhunned a meeting. Inſtead of cruiſing in the Channel, or on its own coaſt, it proceeded to the latitude of Cape Finiſterre, where it plied to and fro during the remainder of the ſeaſon, leaving the Bay of Biſcay, and the track to the French ports, open to the depredations of the Britiſh cruizers and privateers.

The conſequence of this management of its marine was, that France was ſubjected to ſuch loſſes, as excited univerſal clamour and indignation throughout the kingdom. Its trade from every quarter of the world ſuffered in a degree unprecedented in any former war. The number of captures made upon the French was prodigious; and what was an additional aggravation, they chiefly conſiſted of the moſt rich and valuable part of their ſhipping.

The trade of England, on the other hand, was protected in ſo extenſive and effectual a manner, that no loſs of any conſequence was ſuſtained. The ſeas in the neighbourhood of Great Britain enjoyed a ſecurity much beyond the expectations that had been formed at the beginning of the campaign, and totally different from what the enemies of this country had promiſed themſelves, on the opening of the hoſtilities between France and Great Britain.

CHAP. XLI.

Tranſactions in the Eaſt Indies.—Loſſes and Diſappointments of the French.

1778.

THE notification given by the Court of France of its acknowledgment of American independence, was juſtly conſidered as a declaraton of war. In conſequence of a well grounded perſuaſion that a quarrel would now enſue between the two kingdoms, as extenſive in its operations as their reſpective power could make it, it was determined in the councils of the Engliſh Eaſt India Company, as eſſentially concerned in ſuch a diſpute, to put its poſſeſſions into a ſtate of ſecurity with all poſſible ſpeed, and at the ſame time to attack thoſe of France, without waiting for any further formalities.

A reſolution was accordingly taken to act vigorouſly and decifively in India, and to purſue immediate meaſures for the reduction of the principal ſettlements of the French in that country, before they could receive notice in France of the deſigns that were adopted for that purpoſe in England.

The inſtructions diſpatched to this intent, were conveyed to their deſtination with ſuch rapidity, and at the ſame time with ſo much ſecrecy, that a competent force was prepared at Madras under General Monro, and took poſſeſſion of a poſt within four miles of Pondicherry, towards the beginning of Auguſt, without the French Eaſt India Company having received the leaſt intimation of this deſign, or their officers in the Eaſt Indies being apprized of it, before it was begun to be carried into execution.

As

As ſoon as the reinforcements were arrived intended for the proſecution of the ſiege, the place was cloſely inveſted. On the twenty-firſt of Auguſt, the Britiſh troops advanced within cannon-ſhot of the town, and ſeized a thick planted hedge, that ſerved as an outſide fence to the fortifications, which it ſurrounded on every ſide: this confined the garriſon to the town, and deprived it of all inland communication.

In the beginning of September, the beſiegers received a complete ſupply of artillery, and of other ſtores. A reſolution was then taken to attack the place both on the northern and ſouthern ſide, and the trenches were opened on each accordingly.

Before the commencement of the ſiege of Pondicherry, a ſquadron had been ſent from Madras to block it up by ſea. It conſiſted of a ſhip of ſixty guns, one of twenty-eight, and one of twenty, a ſloop, and an armed Eaſt Indiaman: it was commanded by Sir Edward Vernon. On his arrival off that place, he fell in with a French ſquadron under Monſieur de Tronjolly. It was compoſed of a ſhip of ſixty-four guns, one of thirty-ſix, one of thirty-two, and two armed Eaſt Indiamen. Both ſquadrons maintained a warm engagement during the ſpace of two hours; but notwithſtanding their ſuperiority, the French withdrew; and made the beſt of their way into Pondicherry, in order to refit. This engagement took place on the tenth of Auguſt.

Contrary winds and currents obliged the Britiſh ſquadron to leave that ſtation for ſome days. Upon recovering it on the twentieth, the French ſquadron was diſcovered ſtanding out of Pondicherry, apparently with a deſign of engaging. Sir Edward Vernon prepared accordingly for action, not doubting but the preſervation of ſuch a place as Pondicherry, would induce the French commander to exert himſelf

ſelf to the utmoſt in its defence. He approached as near as he could to Pondicherry, and came to an anchor in the road during the night, but in the morning the French ſquadron had diſappeared.—The French commander had taken the opportunity of night to depart, and had accompliſhed his intent with ſuch expedition, that he was at day-break totally out of ſight.

This departure of the French ſquadron enabled Sir Edward Vernon to block up Pondicherry by ſea, and to cut off all ſupplies of proviſions, and ſuccours of any kind from that quarter. The garriſon, though left to themſelves, reſolved however to make as long and obſtinate a defence as their circumſtances would poſſibly enable them. They compoſed a body of three thouſand men, of which a third conſiſted of Europeans. They were commanded by Monſieur de Bellecombe, an officer of great bravery.

On the twenty-eighth of September, the beſiegers began to fire upon the town: their batteries were mounted with thirty pieces of heavy cannon, and twenty-ſeven mortars. They were no leſs vigorouſly anſwered by the fire of the beſieged, who were poſſeſſed of a very numerous artillery, amounting to no leſs than three hundred pieces.

The approaches of the beſiegers, and the works they were carrying on met with great obſtruction from the heavy and frequent rains which fall at this ſeaſon of the year in that climate. They proceeded, however, with ſo much induſtry and ſpirit, that about the middle of October, they began to prepare for an attack on the body of the place.—They conducted both their attacks on the north and the ſouth-ſide of the town with ſuch ſucceſs, that they were meditating a general aſſault, to aſſiſt wherein, a large body of ſeamen and marines were ſent on ſhore from the Britiſh ſquadron in the road.

But

But they were prevented from carrying this deſign into execution by a violent fall of rain on the day before the intended attack: it filled the ditches, and greatly damaged the floats that had been conſtructed to paſs them. Theſe damages, however, were ſoon repaired, and every preparation renewed for a general ſtorming of the town.

By this time the garriſon was greatly reduced: the vigorous reſiſtance they had made, had coſt them near a third of their number, in killed and wounded; and the remainder did not appear, upon calculation, ſufficiently numerous to withſtand the aſſault of near ten thouſand men, of which the army of the beſiegers ſtill conſiſted, after deducting what they had loſt on their ſide ſince the commencement of the ſiege.

Theſe conſiderations induced the French Governor, on the ſixteenth of October, the eve of the projected aſſault, to offer to ſurrender the town on terms of capitulation. His propoſal was readily complied with, and he obtained the moſt generous and favourable conditions that could be granted conſiſtently with the intereſt and ſafety of the Britiſh ſettlements in the Eaſt Indies. It was agreed that the European troops ſhould be ſent home to France, and the ſeapoys, and other country troops diſbanded: the honours of war were paid to the garriſon, and as a teſtimony of eſteem and reſpect for Monſieur de Bellecombe, the regiment of Pondicherry was permitted to retain its colours.

The public ſtores, and whatever belonged to the government, and the French Eaſt India Company, were delivered up, but every individual was allowed to keep his private property.

In this manner were the French diſpoſſeſſed of their principal ſettlement in the Eaſt Indies. The loſs of the beſiegers did not amount to one thouſand men.

When the intelligence of this, and various other loſſes in that part of the world, was brought to Europe, it created great diſſatisfaction in France, and ſtruck all its well-wiſhers with aſtoniſhment.—They ſaw her power totally annihilated in India, and all thoſe vaſt projects which had been forming in reſpect to that country entirely fruſtrated.

Both the French and their abettors began now to abate of thoſe ſanguine expectations they had indulged a few months before. Inſtead of that high-hand with which France had promiſed itſelf to act in every quarter of the globe, it had been uniformly diſappointed every where: inſtead of bringing ruin upon Great Britain, its own ſubjects were reduced to the utmoſt diſtreſs, by the daily and prodigious loſſes attending every branch of their commerce. The failures among the merchants were continual and alarming; the ſea-ports and trading towns were full of complaints, and the people in general as heartily reprobated the meaſure of declaring in favour of America, as they had been eager before in eſpouſing its cauſe.

The caſe of Great Britain was the very reverſe. The immenſe treaſures reſulting from her commerce were ſafely depoſited in her harbours; ſhe had loſt little of what the uſual balance of her trade brought from the Eaſt Indies, and that which ſhe carried on in the different parts of Europe, had met with but an inconſiderable check.

That of France, on the contrary, proſpered no where; her Weſt India iſlands had ſuffered heavily, from the deprivation of innumerable articles wanted for the proſecution of their moſt neceſſary buſineſs, and their very ſubſiſtence. The calculation of the loſſes ſhe had ſuſtained by the capture of her homeward-bound ſhips and fleets, amounted, according to her own confeſſion, to between four and five millions ſterling.

Such

Such were the firſt fruits of the alliance that France had formed with America. The very different ideas that filled the minds of men on its firſt formation, from thoſe with which they were now occupied, ſerved to embitter and aggravate every calamity that was felt by the people of France.—The very policy that had projected this union was called in queſtion, and repreſented as erroneous. The Americans were no longer that favourite nation for the aſſiſtance and relief of which the public was once ſo ready to enter the liſts againſt their oppreſſors; they were now conſidered as an artful and deſigning people, who had by their artifices and intrigues, found means to engage in their quarrel a generous and ſpirited nation, that had in this inſtance been blinded to their real intereſts, and overperſuaded that they could not conſult them more effectually than by embracing the preſent opportunity, afforded by the conteſt between Great Britain and her Colonies, of ruining their ancient rival by eſpouſing the cauſe of theſe latter.

But inſtead of accompliſhing the ruin of this rival, with that facility and promptitude that were held out as infallible, they had met with misfortunes and diſgraces almoſt every where. An iſland or two excepted, of ſmall conſideration, they had been either foiled or diſappointed in every undertaking they had formed, either abroad or at home. D'Eſtaing, whoſe exploits had been anticipated in the imagination of every man in France, had abandoned the coaſt of North America, without being able to make the leaſt impreſſion upon the enemy. He had ſpeeded ſtill worſe in the Weſt Indies, where, notwithſtanding the ſuperiority of his naval and military force, he was defeated both by ſea and land. On the coaſt of France, they had retreated before the Britiſh fleet, after pretending to have beaten it. But that now appeared, what it was

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in reality,—a meer pretence. Had the French fleet been victorious, it would not moſt certainly have fled before a vanquiſhed enemy.

Such were the complaints with which the whole kingdom of France reſounded, while all Europe ſtood aſtoniſhed at the firmneſs and inflexibility with which the Britiſh government faced the innumerable difficulties that had threatened to overwhelm it, and at the courage and activity with which the nation proſecuted every meaſure that was undertaken.

The ſituation of Great Britain was indeed become an object of univerſal ſurprize and admiration. At the commencement of the year, ſhe was apparently in a ſtate of general depreſſion. Her enemies were daily growing ſtronger in the new world, and a ſtorm was gathering in the old, which it was not thought ſhe would have been able to weather. The hopes of the few friends ſhe had were hourly decreaſing, and the hand of Fate ſeemed, as it were, to lie heavy upon her.

But at the expiration of the year, all was reverſed. She had ſtood her ground every where with the utmoſt fortitude: ſhe had triumphed in various parts of the globe, and had loſt reputation in none. She had preſerved the vaſt wealth produced by her immenſe trade, from the depredations of her enemies; and had enriched herſelf with the ſpoils of her principal foe. Her credit remained as firm as ever. Her determination to keep the field againſt all her adverſaries, was equally unſhaken; and her hopes of being able to do it, not leſs founded. Thus, inſtead of that ruin which her enemies had thought proper to prognoſticate, ſhe ſtill abounded in reſources, and her reſolution was unapalled.

France, by the manner ſhe engaged in this conteſt, ſhewed that her inclination to injure Great Britain, was much greater than her power to effect ſuch a

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deſign. Thoſe who ſeemed beſt acquainted with her circumſtances, did not think ſhe was ſufficiently recovered from the diſaſters ſhe had undergone during the laſt war, to enter upon the buſineſs ſhe had taken in hand, with the vigour neceſſary for ſo vaſt an undertaking.

In a project of this nature, a maritime force ſuperiorly deciſive, was an indiſpenſible requiſite. But notwithſtanding her efforts and attention, and the great ſums ſhe had expended on her navy, its condition, at the demiſe of Lewis the Fifteenth, was ſo feeble, that it required a much longer time than that which had elapſed ſince that event, to place it on a footing of parity with that of Great Britain

The French miniſtry did not reflect, that the naval aſſiſtance of the Colonies would not, in the infancy of their independence, and the commencement of their formation into a ſtate, be conſiderable enough to enable her to diſpute the empire of the ocean, with a nation that had ſo long enjoyed it, and was in poſſeſſion of a navy, amounting to one hundred and ten ſhips of the line, ready conſtructed, beſides twenty on the ſtocks. The actual ſtrength of France, conſiſted of between ſeventy and eighty in readineſs, and eight others that were building. Her new allies were not maſters of one ſingle ſhip of the line: they had a great number of privateers; but not above ten or fifteen ſhips that could even be ranked with frigates.

But it was chiefly on the ſuperiority of her ſeamen, that Britain placed her dependance. The valour and the dexterity of her ſailors were unequalled, as well as the experience and ability of her officers and commanders. The French ſhips were crouded with larger multitudes; but the Britiſh had far the greater proportion of real ſeamen.

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It was not long before the French miniſtry was convinced that Great Britain would require more powerful efforts than France was able to make, in order to compaſs the ends propoſed by uniting with America. Neither honour nor profit had accrued from the events of the firſt campaign; and the ſecond promiſed ſtill leſs, from the ſtronger ſtate of preparation, and the prodigious exertions that were making thoughout England, to aſcertain her ſecurity at home, and to meet her enemies with all the naval ſtrength that ſhe could collect.

In this conviction, France began to turn her thoughts to that branch of her royal family that ſat on the throne of Spain. The compact between the members of that potent family, was thought a ſufficient motive to induce the Spaniſh miniſtry to cooperate with the French, in reducing the power of the common enemy of the Houſe of Bourbon, and they applied to it accordingly.

Never, in the mean time, did the power and importance of Great Britain appear with greater ſplendour, than upon the cloſe of this memorable period of the war. Though labouring under the moſt violent diviſions at home, and without the intervention of a ſingle friend from abroad, ſhe ſtill was able to carry on a vigorous and extenſive war on the diſtant and vaſt continent of North America; and not only to bid defiance to the navies of France, but to ruin the principal branches of her trade in both extremities of the globe, and to ſeize the major part of her commercial fleets on her own coaſt.

The truth was, that before France had declared herſelf the protectreſs of America, the Britiſh nation hardly conſidered itſelf as being at war; and expreſſed no animation in the proſecution of thoſe hoſtilities that had taken place in the Colonies. But the moment France intervened, the ſight of its old and natural enemy rouſed it at once into action. The

people

people of this country, for the firſt time ſince the commencement of the diſpute, felt themſelves intereſted in it.

The French themſelves, from the little diſpoſition they beheld in the Engliſh to act with their uſual fervour in the diſpute with the Coloniſts, imagined that the ſame temper would continue to influence their conduct againſt thoſe who ſhould favour them: but they forgot that national antipathy, when all other motives fail, is ſtrong enough, of itſelf, to reſtore energy to a people, and to call forth all their exertions.

The French experienced this in the fulleſt manner. Inſtead of the faint and languid oppoſition they expected, they ſaw this nation ſtart at once from that ſtate of indifference, in which it had ſo long, and poſſibly might have ſtill longer remained, but for this inſult and provocation from its ancient rival. The ſpirit of emulation ſeized it immediately; and it is no untruth to ſay, that France, by becoming a party in the diſpute againſt Britain, gave it an entire new turn; and infuſed a degree of ſpirit and activity in all the meaſures of this country of which ſhe was the firſt to feel the effects, and perhaps to repent the cauſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLII.

Proceedings in Parliament.—Trial of Admiral Keppel.

1778.

Nov. 20, 1778. THE meeting of Parliament, at the cloſe of the ſeaſon of action, was attended with anxious expectation, in what manner it would proceed in the midſt of the new ſcenes that had opened.

The ſubſtance of the ſpeech from the Throne, was a repreſentation of the injurious conduct of France, a reliance on the ſpirit and exertions of the nation in its own defence, the vigour and ſucceſs with which the commerce of the enemy had been annoyed, and the ſafety and proſperity which had accompanied their own. The neceſſity of employing the moſt reſolute efforts equally by land and ſea.

Oppoſition ſtill continued inimical to the miniſtry, and expreſſed the higheſt diſſatisfaction at the proſpect of its being entruſted with the conduct of ſo important a war as the preſent, after having managed the affairs of the nation with ſuch ill ſucceſs.

The buſineſs of the commiſſion in America, was mentioned with great diſapprobation. It was repreſented as diſgraceful and uſeleſs: the propoſals it carried out, had, as foretold, been refuſed by the Americans, as unſatisfactory; and had only ſhewn the impolicy of this country in the meaſures it had adopted on that continent.

There was one meaſure, however, in which oppoſition concurred with an unanimity peculiarly characteriſtic of the invariable diſpoſition of Engliſh-

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men towards France. The moſt vigorous proſecution of hoſtilities was recommended againſt that power. Hatred to this country, and views of her own aggrandizement, were the ſole motives that had induced France to attack Great Britain. It would therefore be the wiſeſt policy to turn the full tide of war upon that irreconcilable enemy, and to employ the courage and ſtrength of the Britiſh nation in taking the ampleſt revenge upon a people, who ſhewed themſelves determined to let no opportunity paſs of injuring this country, and of effecting its total ruin if it were to be accompliſhed.

By directing the operations of war againſt the poſſeſſions of France, ſhe would be obliged to recall her attention home, and be leſs at liberty to ſupport her new allies. Inſtead of an advantage, ſhe would find her alliance with America a burden; which loſſes and diſtreſſes would probably induce her to ſhake off, or, at leaſt, to lighten, by confining her defence chiefly to herſelf. Were Great Britain to exert the force ſhe had, with judgment and ſpirit, the French would find her an overmatch in the preſent inſtance; as the war would be almoſt entirely a naval one, for which the reſources of Great Britain were peculiarly calculated.

While oppoſition recommended the moſt active and ſpirited meaſures againſt France, it equally reprobated the continuance of hoſtilities againſt the Colonies: all endeavours to compel them to ſubmiſſion were additional motives for attaching themſelves to France. They fought and reſiſted from the dread of falling under our domination: were that apprehenſion once removed, were they to be thoroughly convinced that we meant henceforth to treat them on the footing of friends, and of a people whom we were willing to conſider as brethren, their animoſity would ceaſe; and notwithſtanding the many cauſes we had given them for reſentment,

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they would, on a return of kind treatment from this country, not be averſe to a friendly accommodation. To this there was every reaſon to think they would be induced, from the power we ſhould immediately acquire of cutting off their communication with France, provided we directly withdrew our forces from America, and applied them to the reduction of the French iſlands. This would oblige that power to ſum up her whole exertions for their defence, and totally to relinquiſh the protection of her new allies. Were theſe to be ſo unwiſe as to refuſe to treat ſeperately, our naval force would eaſily reſtrain them within their own limits, and prevent them from being of any aſſiſtance to France.

Such were the general allegations on the ſide of oppoſition; to which they added ſeveral ſtrictures on the dilatorineſs and impropriety of miniſterial meaſures, on the rupture with France firſt taking place.

The miniſtry, after a general reply on the ſubject of American affairs, entered into a particular juſtification of their meaſures in the beginning of the campaign. The detention of the ſquadron under Admiral Byron was, they ſaid, indiſpenſible, until the deſtination of that under Count D'Eſtaing was aſcertained. A junction of this latter with the Breſt fleet, would have given France a fatal ſuperiority in the Channel, which was happily obviated by waiting till the Toulon ſquadron had ſailed.

The evacuation of Philadelphia was repreſented as abſolutely neceſſary on the declaration of France for America. The large detachments that muſt be drawn from our army on that continent, for the purpoſe of attacking the French iſlands in the Weſt Indies, would, by diminiſhing it, naturally contract its offenſive operations. To render them efficacious, it was requiſite to compreſs and unite its ſtrength within leſs extenſive bounds than before, when

when it was more numerous and able to annoy the enemy at once in various places. New York was a more central, and convenient ſituation than Philadelphia. It lay open to the reception of ſupplies and reinforcements; it was a ſtation where fleets and armies could remain in ſecurity; and from whence expeditions could proceed with much greater diſpatch than elſewhere, to any other part of the continent, or to the iſlands.

Among other diſcuſſions in the debates of this day, it was warmly aſſerted, that a continuation of coercive meaſures in America was highly expedient. Britain had ſtill a number of friends in that large country. Many of thoſe who from their ſituation ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the diſpoſitions of the natives, did not ſcruple to affirm that two thirds of them were deſirous of a reconciliation with great Britain, upon the terms held out by the commiſſioners. The reaſon why they did not expreſs their ſentiments openly, was the terror of thoſe who had arms in their hands, and were determined at all events to ſupport the ſyſtem adopted by Congreſs. Independence on the parent ſtate, was by no means the wiſh of the generality of the better ſort. It was chiefly the plan of a particular claſs of men, influenced by republican principles, and the ambition of riſing to power and conſequence. Conſcious they could not compaſs this by remaining in a ſtate of peaceable ſubjection, as heretofore, they had reſolved, ſooner than miſs their aim, to embroil their country in diſſentions, to throw off its connection with Britain, and to call in the aſſiſtance of foreigners againſt all who ſhould oppoſe their deſigns.

Such being the ſituation of the Colonies, it would be unworthy of that character of generoſity and perſeverance, which the Britiſh nation had always maintained, either to abandon the protection of thoſe

who adhered to this country, or to give up the ſovereignty over it, without having firſt exerted all its efforts to ſupport the one, and to retain the other.

But the principal ſubject of debate was concerning an amendment to the addreſs, requeſting an inquiry into the cauſes of the preſent difficulties, and by what councils the kingdom had been brought into that perilous poſture of affairs, from which it was become ſo arduous a taſk to extricate it.

Both parties on this occaſion went over the long beaten ground of the innumerable arguments produced by the American conteſt; but the miniſterial party proved the ſtrongeſt, though not without a ſevere conflict, that laſted till near three in the morning, when the addreſs was carried without the amendment, by a majority of two hundred and twenty-ſix, to one hundred and ſeven.

In the Houſe of Lords the debates were incomparably more violent than in that of Commons. Oppoſition there aſſumed a method of proceeding entirely new, and that ſtruck miniſtry with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment. In order to expreſs the more forcibly their diſapprobation of the totality of meaſures that were recommended by the royal ſpeech, and approved of by the addreſs, they refuſed their concurrence to the preſenting of any.

The motives alledged for this extraordinary ſtep, were the ſame that had already been ſo often repeated; the incapacity of the preſent miniſters, the ill ſucceſs with which all their meaſures had been conſtantly attended, the diſpair of the nation that any change of fortune would be brought about through their means, the neceſſity of placing ſuch men at the head of affairs in this critical ſeaſon, as the public could look up to with hope and confidence.

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They inſiſted upon a full and circumſtantial inquiry into the origin of the multiplicity of evils and diſtreſſes that afflicted the whole empire. Diſſatisfaction and ſuſpicion filled all denominations of ſubjects: the naval and military claſſes, in particular, expreſſed a diffidence in thoſe at the helm, and were involved in ſuch diſſentions as threatened the moſt fatal conſequences. Theſe were evils of ſuch magnitude, as required immediate inſpection: unleſs a ſpeedy cure was applied, they would prove mortal to the ſtate; and no cure could be expected without a radical extirpation of the cauſe. A complete and impartial inquiry, who were the real authors of all theſe calamities, ought therefore to be inſtituted, without any reſpect or exception of perſons.

The miniſtry condemned, in terms of the greateſt ſeverity, this attempt to put a negative on the preſentation of any addreſs. They treated it as unprecedented and unauthorized by any juſt reaſoning; and utterly ſubverſive of the harmony that ought to ſubſiſt between the executive and the deliberative power of the ſtate, in ſuch perilous times.

Inquiries into the conduct of miniſtry might be inſtituted at any time; but ought never to prevent unanimity in ſupporting government, eſpecially in caſes of ſuch exigency as the preſent.

The whole ſyſtem of public affairs was now altered. The nature of the conteſt was entirely different from what it had been till the preſent criſis. The altercation between Great Britain and her Colonies, was now changed into a diſpute between this kingdom and that of France. The queſtion was, whether we ſhould paſſively ſubmit to the dictates of that imperious power, and ſuffer it, without reſiſtance, to wreſt our property out of our hands. It was not ſo much the loſs of this property that ſhould affect us, as the indignity of acquieſcing tamely in the manner of its being loſt. France had inſidiouſly

pretended to embrace a diſintereſted and neutral part in regard to this unhappy diſpute; but after deceiving us with the warmeſt profeſſions of peace and amity, it had, contrary to all maxims of candour and probity, broken through all thoſe aſſurances, and violated her faith, in a manner wholly inconſiſtent with that rank and character ſhe aſſumed, and totally derogatory to that high ſenſe of honour on which ſhe ſo much valued herſelf, and founded ſo ſuperior a claim of reſpect.

Allowing that the uſual practice of politicians countenanced theſe deviations from public integrity, ſtill it was incumbent on the party aggrieved by them, to ſhew his reſentment, and to ſeek reparation for the injury done him, by every means in his power. The perfidious policy of the times might, in ſome meaſure, excuſe theſe reciprocal acts of treachery, too common among nations; but the very aggreſſors in theſe caſes did not expect to eſcape without feeling the ſevereſt vengeance of thoſe who were able to inflict it.

France and America having made one common cauſe, they could not be disjoined, and the proſecution of war with the one, neceſſarily included hoſtilities with the other. To act with remiſſneſs in America, from an idea of bringing it ſooner to a reconciliation, would be weakneſs in the extreme: it would expoſe us to the contempt and deriſion equally of the French and the Americans.

Neither America nor France were ſuch objects of terror as ſome people took a delight in repreſenting them. The events of the laſt campaign had ſhewn, that Britain was in fact rather an object of terror to them. The Americans, it was well known, dreaded to meet us on equal ground; and the French had, with particular care and ſolicitude, ſtudied to avoid our fleets, wherever they had not a decided and incomparable ſuperiority.

The war with France being a matter of neceſſity, it was the duty of the Houſe to ſtand by the Throne, with their warmeſt reſolutions to ſupport it againſt that antient and inveterate enemy. The nation at large expreſſed the moſt reſolute determination to ſecond the efforts of government. It would be ſhameful in its rulers to appear leſs firm and animated on ſo trying an occaſion, and in ſo juſt a cauſe. The preſent war with France was defenſive in every reſpect. Were the conteſt with the Colonies to be deſerving of reprehenſion on the part of Britain, ſtill the quarrel with France was of its own ſeeking; it behoved, therefore, every man who felt for the honour, as well as for the intereſt of his country, to eſpouſe its cauſe unfeignedly and without heſitation. Thoſe who refuſed to concur in ſuch a requiſite and laudable meaſure, would merit no other appellation than that of foes to Great Britain.

The iſſue of this debate was, that the addreſs was carried, as propoſed by miniſtry, by a majority, upon a diviſion, of ſixty-ſeven to thirty-five.

A few days after the meeting of Parliament, the proclamation of the third of October, iſſued by the Commiſſioners in America, was made a particular ſubject of inveſtigation in both Houſes.

In the Houſe of Commons, the heavieſt cenſures were paſſed on that part of the proclamation which threatened harſh treatment to the Coloniſts, in caſe of their continuing in their adherence to France.—It was condemned as inhuman and barbarous, and unbecoming a civilized and generous people.

It was moved, in conſequence, that an addreſs ſhould be preſented to the throne, expreſſing the abhorrence of Parliament for thoſe paſſages in the proclamation, and requeſting the King publicly to diſavow them.

Miniſtry ſupported the propriety of thoſe paſſages; aſſerting, that they imported no more, than that the Coloniſts, by withdrawing themſelves from the obedience they owed to Britain, and throwing themſelves into the arms of France, were of courſe become as much our enemies as that power itſelf, and could expect no more indulgence from this country in the courſe of its future hoſtilities with them than France itſelf.

A moſt virulent and acrimonious debate enſued upon this occaſion, which was at the ſame time accompanied with much collateral matter ariſing from it, as well as with perſonal invective. But the addreſs was rejected, upon a diviſion, by two hundred and nine, againſt one hundred and twenty-two.

An addreſs of the ſame nature was propoſed by the oppoſition in the Houſe of Lords, and ſupported by much the ſame arguments; but it was rejected by a majority of ſeventy-one, to thirty-ſeven.

In the mean time, the iſſue of the engagement between the Britiſh and French fleets, on the twenty-ſeventh of July, had become a ſubject of frequent and ſevere diſcuſſion among all ranks and claſſes. Great complaints were made throughout the fleet, that by the impropriety of conduct of the Blue diviſion, the opportunity of obtaining a complete victory over the French fleet had been loſt.

The diſcuſſions on this matter became gradually the principal ſubject of the public papers, and were carried on with a warmth and vehemence, that ſet the whole nation into a ferment of the moſt violent and outrageous nature. The friends of the Vice Admiral of the Blue were no leſs hot and poſitive in the defence of his conduct, than his opponents were in its condemnation. Incenſed at the cenſorious manner with which it was treated, they laboured

boured to repreſent it as brave and judicious beyond reprehenſion, and even ſuperiorly meritorious to that of the commander in chief.

This altercation in the daily prints became a ſource of the moſt injurious and unguarded provocations on both ſides of the queſtion. Thoſe who eſpouſed the cauſe of the Admiral, manifeſted no leſs determination in contradicting the repeated aſſertions of ſuperior merit in his opponent, and accuſing him in the moſt open and explicit manner of being the real cauſe of the eſcape of the French fleet, through his diſobedience of the ſignals and orders of his commander, and by remaining at a diſtance with his diviſion, inſtead of coming to the aſſiſtance of the reſt of the fleet. Theſe charges, which were made with unuſual ſtrength and confidence, excited a general deſire of a further elucidation of this matter.

An accuſation of ſo weighty a nature, was very grievous and alarming to Sir Hugh Palliſer. He applied to Admiral Keppel for a juſtification of his conduct, and a clearance from thoſe imputations which were ſo hurtful to his profeſſional character. He required of him to ſign and publiſh a paper, ſtating particulars relative to the engagement of the twenty-ſeventh of July; one of which was to ſpecify as a fact, that he did not intend by his ſignals on the evening of that day, to renew the battle at that time, but to be in readineſs for it the next morning.

On the rejection of this demand by Admiral Keppel, Sir Hugh Palliſer publiſhed in one of the daily papers a variety of circumſtances concerning that engagement, which were prefaced by a letter, to which he ſigned his name. This publication reflected ſeverely on the conduct of the Admiral.

An attack ſo public, and ſo detrimental to his character, induced Admiral Keppel to declare to

the Admiralty, that unleſs Sir Hugh Palliſer ſhould explain this matter to his ſatisfaction, he could not, conſiſtently with his reputation, ever act conjointly with him.

This altercation happening before the meeting of Parliament, was of courſe taken notice of when it met. In the Houſe of Peers, the Earl of Briſtol demanded of the firſt Lord of the Admiralty, an inquiry into the conduct of the commanders of the fleet on the twenty-ſeventh of July, aſſigning as a reaſon for this demand, the declaration of Admiral Keppel, that he would not reſume the command, until ſuch an inquiry had taken place.

The anſwer to this requiſition was, that circumſtances did not require it. The conſequences of the engagement on the twenty-ſeventh of July, had anſwered every purpoſe that could have been expected. The French fleet, though neither taken nor deſtroyed, had been ſo effectually diſabled and diſheartened, that after flying away from the Engliſh fleet in the night, to avoid a purſuit, it had not dared to face it during the whole remainder of the campaign,. All the benefits of the completeſt victory had thereby been produced; the trade of this country had received the moſt extenſive protection, while that of France had been ruined.

The inſtitution of an inquiry would be productive of the moſt fatal effects. It would breed diſſentions, and occaſion enmity and faction among the naval claſſes. This would lead to the moſt pernicious conſequences, eſpecially at a time when unanimity was ſo much needed. Such an inquiry would no leſs injure the ſervice, by depriving it of a number of officers, whoſe attendance would be requiſite on a trial of ſuch importance, and who muſt be abſent from their duty, while their preſence was ſo much wanted in their different ſtations.—

Thus

Thus the ſucceſs of the preceding year would in a great meaſure be defeated by ſuch a meaſure.

This inquiry would no leſs wound the public peace of the kingdom: parties would be formed on each ſide, with all that heat and violence characteriſtic of this nation. Whichever way the matter was decided, they would ſtill remain, and fill the public with ſuſpicions and animoſities, that would continue for a long time to diſturb both public and private tranquility.

In the Houſe of Commons this ſubject was taken up in the ſame manner. It was urged, that as Admiral Keppel had expreſſed a public refuſal to ſerve in conjunction with Sir Hugh Palliſer, the cauſe of ſuch a declaration ought to be made known, by a thorough inveſtigation of the conduct that had occaſioned it.

The nation had a right to be fully informed of the nature of the conteſt between two officers in ſuch high truſt. Whoever of the two was in fault, ought unqueſtionably to undergo condign puniſhment. If the diſpute proceeded from ſlight cauſes, they ought to be removed with all ſpeed, and no difference be ſuffered to ſubſiſt between the principal commanders in the navy, among whom unanimity was peculiarly neceſſary in the diſcharge of their reſpective duties.

Admiral Keppel, and Sir Hugh Palliſer, who were both preſent in the Houſe on this occaſion, ſpoke ſeverally to the point in queſtion in ſupport of their reſpective conduct. The iſſue of the conteſt between them was, that a motion was made for an addreſs to the Crown to bring Sir Hugh Palliſer to a trial, for his behaviour in the late engagement with the French fleet.

In anſwer to this motion, Sir Hugh Palliſer replied in a ſpeech of great warmth and vehemence, that he had already demanded and obtained a court-martial

martial to ſit on Admiral Keppel, whom he charged with having through his miſconduct cauſed the failure of ſucceſs in that engagement.

This communication occaſioned great aſtoniſhment in the Houſe. It had been, and ſtill continued to be the general deſire of individuals of all parties, to heal this breach between theſe two officers, and to prevent it from going any further at a time when the ſervices of both were ſo much needed. The feuds that would ariſe in the navy from ſuch a litigation were fully foreſeen, and the miſchievous influence they would have upon the affairs of the nation. From theſe weighty motives, it was the cordial wiſh of the Houſe to put an end to this altercation with all ſpeed.

It was therefore with univerſal concern the Houſe was informed of the determination that had been taken to bring Admiral Keppel to a trial; the foreſight of what would be the reſult of ſuch a ſtep, ſtruck them with the greateſt anxiety.

Admiral Keppel conducted himſelf on this occaſion with remarkable temper and coolneſs of expreſſion. He acquieſced without reluctance in the orders that had been laid upon him to prepare for a trial of his conduct, which he hoped would not, upon inquiry, appear to have been diſhonourable or injurious to his country, any more than diſgraceful to himſelf.

Much diſcontent was created by the Board of Admiralty's admitting the charges againſt Admiral Keppel, and appointing a trial. It was condemned in the Houſe in terms of the greateſt ſeverity. It was aſſerted to have been their duty to have laboured with the utmoſt earneſtneſs, and exerted their whole official influence to ſtifle this unhappy diſagreement between two brave and valuable men, the conſequences of which they well knew, and ought to have obviated, by interpoſing as re-

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conciliators, inſtead of promoting the diſpute, by conſenting to bring it to a judicial and public hearing. Imputations of a heavier kind were made on this occaſion, and expreſſed with great explicitneſs and freedom of ſentiments and language.

The anſwer made by thoſe who undertook to juſtify the conduct of the Lords of the Admiralty was, that they could not conſiſtently with the impartiality which they owed to every officer of the navy, refuſe to receive all matters of complaint relating to ſubjects of their department. They had no right to decide on the merits of any caſe laid before them; they were bound to refer it to a court compoſed of naval officers, who were the only proper and competent judges of each others conduct in profeſſional matters.

Every man in that line was naturally deſirous to be tried by his peers. Both military and naval caſes were of ſo complex and difficult a texture, that none but perſons belonging to the profeſſion had any pretence to paſs a judgment upon them. In conformity with theſe principles, which were founded upon the cleareſt equity, they left the deciſion of the preſent altercation to the gentlemen of the navy, whoſe honour and integrity in all inſtances of this kind had never been called in queſtion, and by whoſe verdict alone it was but juſt and reaſonable that every officer in that line of ſervice ſhould wiſh to ſtand or fall.

The arguments upon this ſubject were manifold, and urged with great heat and violence on both ſides. They were productive of uncommon animoſity and rancour, and opened a door to a ſpirit of contention that diffuſed itſelf through all claſſes of ſociety.

People of moderation and candour lamented with unfeigned ſorrow, the rage and fury by which both parties were governed on this unfortunate emergency.

cy. Such was the height of paſſion that prevailed every where, that the critical circumſtances of the nation were wholly forgotten, and the attention of the public entirely abſorbed in this fatal diſpute. Individuals of all ranks, and all profeſſions, engaged in it with as much zeal as if they had been perſonally concerned in the iſſue.

The diſſatisfaction that was excited upon this occaſion among the upper claſſes in the navy, appeared in a memorial that was preſented to the King by twelve of the oldeſt and moſt diſtinguiſhed Admirals, at the head of whom was the name of that great and illuſtrious commander Lord Hawke.

The conduct of Sir Hugh Palliſer was therein condemned without reſerve; that of the Admiralty itſelf was ſeverely cenſured, as having eſtabliſhed a precedent pregnant with the moſt ruinous conſequences to the naval ſervice of the kingdom. By the meaſure it had now adopted, that board had ſubmitted to become the inſtrument of any individual who might be prompted by iniquitous motives to deprive the navy of its beſt and higheſt officers.

They repreſented it as a deſtructive violation of all order and diſcipline in the navy, to permit and countenance long concealed, and afterwards precipitately adopted charges, and recriminatory accuſations of ſubordinate officers againſt their commanders in chief. They reprobated it as highly improper and ſcandalous, to ſuffer men at once in high civil office, and in ſubordinate command, previous to their making ſuch accuſations, to attempt to corrupt the judgment of the public, by publiſhing libels on their officers in a common newſpaper, which tended at once to excite diſſentions in the navy, and to prejudice the minds of thoſe who were to try the merits of the accuſation againſt the ſuperior officer.

Query — Whether, to put an end to this disgraceful business, it would not have been good policy to have — What

What added conſiderable weight to this memorial, was, that the majority of thoſe who ſubſcribed it, were not only officers of the firſt rank and importance in the navy, but unconnected with the oppoſition, and attached by various motives to the court and miniſtry. This evinced their conduct in the preſent inſtance, to have been uninfluenced by conſiderations of party.

The minds of men of all profeſſions and degrees were ſo entirely engroſſed by the trial of Admiral Keppel, that no buſineſs of any conſequence was agitated in either of the Houſes of Parliament while it continued. The moſt active members in both were now at Portſmouth, detained by the intereſt they took in the cauſe of the two contendants.

This famous trial begun upon the ſeventh of January, ſeventy-nine, and laſted more than a month, not ending till the eleventh day of February enſuing. After a long and accurate inveſtigation of every ſpecies of evidence that could be produced, upon a buſineſs of ſuch intricacy, as well as importance, the court-martial acquitted Admiral Keppel of all the charges that had been brought againſt him, in the completeſt and moſt honourable manner. He was declared in the cleareſt and moſt explicit terms, to have acted the part of a judicious, brave, and experienced officer; and the accuſation was condemned in the ſevereſt language.

The ſatisfaction felt and expreſſed upon the acquittal of Admiral Keppel was conſpicuous in the higheſt degree. Both Houſes of Parliament voted him their thanks for the eminent ſervices he had performed, and the whole nation reſounded with his applauſe.

The City of London diſtinguiſhed itſelf in the moſt ſtriking manner, by the zeal with which it teſtified its participation in the general ſatisfaction

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of the public. It beſtowed every honour and mark of reſpect in its power upon Admiral Keppel; who certainly had ample cauſe to congratulate himſelf, upon the many proofs of unfeigned eſteem and attachment, which he experienced upon this memorable occaſion.

The reſentment againſt his accuſer operated in no leſs ſtriking and forcible a manner. The tide of popular rage was ſo ſtrong, that it conſtrained him to retire wholly from public life, and to reſign all his employments.

But notwithſtanding the high degree of national favour and eſteem, in which Admiral Keppel now ſtood, it was ſoon diſcovered that they would avail little in reſtoring him to authority and command; and he thought it prudent to withdraw from a ſituation wherein he found himſelf not acceptable.

The diſſatisfaction occaſioned by this treatment of Admiral Keppel, contributed powerfully to embitter the oppoſition againſt thoſe who were conſidered as the authors of it. Thoſe who preſided at the Board of Admiralty underwent a ſevere examination of their conduct. It was repreſented as erroneous and faulty in the extreme; and no pains were omitted to lay it forth in ſuch colours, as to make it appear deſerving of the higheſt reprehenſion.

Its conduct for a ſeries of years, was animadverted upon with the utmoſt cenſure and reprobation. A multitude of facts and particulars were cited, in proof of the aſſertions, and in ſupport of the charges made againſt thoſe who adminiſtered this department. Their conduct the laſt ſummer eſpecially, was adverted to as greatly deficient in prudence, and as having expoſed the kingdom to the moſt ſerious danger.

Adminiſtration made a long and circumſtantial reply to theſe charges. The debates upon this occaſion

caſion were unuſually animated; and repeatedly called forth the abilities of the the different ſpeakers on both ſides.

A reſolution had been moved on the part of oppoſition, in conſequence of theſe charges, tending to condemn the conduct of the Admiralty during the preceding year; but it was rejected by a majority of two hundred and four, to one hundred and ſeventy.

So inconſiderable a proportion in favour of miniſtry, emboldened oppoſition to reſume its attack upon the Board; but it was again defeated by much the ſame majority.

The intent of oppoſition in this latter attempt, was to ſhew that the ſtate of the navy was inadequate to the vaſt expences incurred for its ſupport and augmentation. The chief argument uſed in proof of this aſſertion, was the ſuperiority of the ſums granted for the navy of late years, to thoſe granted in former; from whence it was inferred, that the Navy ought to have been much more numerous.

The circumſtance chiefly alledged in exculpation of the Admiralty, was the larger ſize of the ſhips at preſent conſtructed, in compariſon of thoſe built in the time alluded to in the eſtimate adduced by oppoſition.

Theſe debates concerning the navy were marked by the declaration of Lord Howe and Admiral Keppel, the two principal officers at that time in the the ſea ſervice, that they were determined to withdraw themſelves from it, whlie it continued under the preſent direction.

This reſignation was ſhortly after followed by that of Sir Robert Harland, Sir John Lindſay, and ſeveral other officers of great reputation. So general were the diſcontents, that no leſs, it was ſaid, than twenty Captains of the firſt diſtinction in the navy, had purpoſed to throw up their commiſſions in a body

body on the ſame day. Nothing but the ſenſe of the very great need in which their country ſtood of their abilities, prevented them from executing their determination.

This readineſs to relinquiſh the public ſervice in ſo many of the ableſt naval commanders, excited a general alarm throughout the nation, and occaſioned a direct attack from oppoſition, againſt the principal Lord of the Admiralty. A motion was made that an addreſs ſhould be preſented to the Crown, for the removing him from his ſtation at that Board.

Beſides the arguments already alledged, the ſpirit of diſcontent and defection now reigning in the navy, was chiefly inſiſted upon, and the danger of loſing, at a time when moſt wanted, the courage and capacity of the beſt officers in the navy.

The reply to this charge was, that they had not been diſmiſſed; their reſignation was voluntary and unrequeſted. They acted out of character in aſſuming the freedom to require that miniſters ſhould be diſcharged from their reſpective departments. Should they continue to refuſe their ſervices to the ſtate, others might be found to replace them.

After a violent altercation, that took up a great part of the night, the motion for the removal of Lord Sandwich from his office, was rejected by a majority of two hundred and twenty, to one hundred and eighteen.

This debate was followed, within a few days, by the appointment of a committtee, to inquire into the conduct of the American war. It took place at the requeſt of Lord and Sir William Howe, in order to clear themſelves of any imputation of miſmanagement.

An inquiry of this nature had long been earneſtly deſired by the the public. Multitudes had been impreſſed with an opinion, that the reduction of America by ſuch a force as had been ſent from this country

try to that purpoſe, would have been completed with facility in one, or in two campaigns at moſt. They were impatient at the delay which attended this buſineſs, and were anxious to know what were the cauſes of it.

It was therefore become neceſſary to lay before the public, the real cauſes of the failure of this important object, and to inform them of thoſe particulars, without the knowledge of which, they could not form an adequate idea of the ſubject in queſtion.

To this intent Sir William Howe, in a ſpeech which laſted near two hours, delivered with great preciſion and perſpicuity, a narrative of his conduct during the time he commanded in America. His account was liſtened to with uncommon attention; and ſeemed to make a powerful impreſſion upon the hearers.

The aſſertions he made, and the facts he advanced, were ſupported by the teſtimony of ſeveral witneſſes, equally reſpectable from their rank and character. They were, Earl Cornwallis, Major General Grey, Sir Andrew Hammond, Major Montreſor, Chief Engineer, and Sir George Oſborne, a member of the Houſe of Commons.

From their concurrent allegations and remarks, they appeared to be clearly of opinion, that the forces ſent to America were at no period of the war, ſufficiently numerous to reduce it. That the real cauſe of this, was the inimical diſpoſition of the Americans, who were almoſt unanimous in their determination to reſiſt the efforts of Great Britain to ſubdue them. It alſo proceeded from the nature of the country, which was peculiarly unfavourable to military operations. From theſe two conſiderations, it was uncommonly difficult, and oftentimes impoſſible to reconnoitre the enemy, or to obtain any intelligence that could be relied on, touching

the roads, the ſituation of places, or of ground, or the means of procuring forage or proviſions. For want of this latter article, eſpecially, it was impracticable for the army to act at any diſtance from the fleet, or without having poſſeſſion of both ſides of ſome navigable river: and its motions were attended with much delay, and often with great danger, from being uſually confined in its march to a ſingle column.

It appeared at the ſame time from their teſtimony, that the encampment to which the Americans retreated after their defeat at Long Iſland, in Auguſt, ſeventy-ſix, was ſo ſtrongly fortified, and the enemy within it in ſuch force, that it would have been an act of the greateſt temerity, to have attacked it without artillery and the other neceſſary preparations for ſuch an attempt. This particular was ſtated in anſwer to thoſe who had blamed Sir William Howe for not having made an immediate aſſault on that encampment.

A variety of other particulars were mentioned by them in anſwer to other charges againſt ſome parts of his conduct. They were unanimouſly of opinion, that his proceedings in the inſtances animadverted upon were the moſt eligible and judicious he could have choſen. The facts they eſtabliſhed were ſuch, in ſhort, as proved him to have acted with a valour and prudence adequate to the importance of his command.

In order to invalidate the aſſertions made by Sir William Howe, together with the teſtimonies adduced in his favour, two counter-witneſſes were called in by the adverſe party. Theſe were Major General Robertſon, Deputy Governor of New York, and Mr. Joſeph Galloway, an American gentleman.

The counter-evidence produced againſt Sir William Howe, chiefly tended to diſprove or debilitate what had been depoſed in his defence.—Its principal aim was to eſtabliſh a great ſuperiority in number

of

of ſuch as were inclined to the cauſe of Britain, among the natives of America, comparatively to thoſe who oppoſed it: that had a proper uſe been made of this diſpoſition, it might have been rendered highly ſerviceable, and would have eſſentially contributed to a ſucceſsful termination of the war. That the Britiſh forces in America were fully adequate to the ſuppreſſion of all reſiſtance. That the country was not ſo full of obſtructions and impediments in the way of armies, as had been repreſented. That its woods and foreſts were no obſtacles to prevent armies from marching in as many columns as they judged proper. That the Britiſh troops excelled the Americans in their own methods of buſh-fighting. That the American army had uſually, if not at all times, been inferior in ſtrength to what it had been repreſented.

Various charges of miſconduct were alſo brought againſt both Lord and Sir William Howe; but they were ſuch as had been already contradicted in the moſt poſitive and direct manner by the previous depoſitions in their favour.

It was particularly noticed during this examination, that ſtrong credit was due to the teſtimony brought for them. It reſted upon perſons of known integrity and judgment. Their knowledge was gathered from what they had perſonally ſeen and experienced. They had been ocular witneſſes of the events they deſcribed; and thoroughly acquainted with the meaſures upon which they had delivered their opinions: they were military men, and in that light were competent to decide on military tranſactions, eſpecially ſuch at which they were preſent.

The ſame advantages were not found in a proportionable degree, in thoſe whoſe teſtimony was brought to combat theirs. One of them was not a militaty man; and though the other was a gentle-

man of a very reſpectable character, as well as an officer of great merit, yet he had chiefly been in garriſons during the preſent war, and had not aſſiſted at thoſe operations which were now the object of inquiry. It was no leſs obſerved, that the evidence for Sir William Howe was affirmative and circumſtantial; that againſt him, general and negative.

The inquiry into the conduct of Sir William Howe, encouraged General Burgoyne to ſolicit the Houſe to afford him alſo an opportunity of clearing himſelf of the cenſures which he had ſo largely experienced.

His requeſt appeared ſo reaſonable, and he had been treated of late with ſo much ſeverity, that all parties concurred in thinking, that he demanded no more than what he was juſtly entitled to expect from the equity of that Houſe. He was accordingly permitted to produce the neceſſary authorities for his juſtification.

The witneſſes that appeared on his behalf, were, Sir Guy Carleton, Governor of the Province of Quebec at the time of General Burgoyne's expedition; the Earl of Belcarras, Captain Money, Quarter Maſter General of his army; the Earl of Harrington, Major Forbes, Captain Bloomfield of the Artillery, and Lieutenant-Colonel Kingſton, Adjutant-General.

The firſt of theſe officers excepted, whoſe duty retained him at Quebec upon that occaſion, the others had attended General Burgoyne during the whole time of his expedition, and had of courſe been preſent at the tranſactions that were now to be ſubmitted to a parliamentary examination.

The account they laid before the Houſe, was remarkably accurate and perſpicuous. As they had ſhared in all the hardſhips and perils of that memorable enterprize, they were fully qualified to deſcribe

deſcribe it in its proper colours. The teſtimony they gave, was ſuch, as placed General Burgoyne's character in the moſt meritorious and conſpicuous light.

It appeared, that throughout the whole of this expedition, the General had, as occaſions required, acted equally the part of a commander and of a ſoldier. That amidſt the diſappointments and diſtreſſes they were continually ſtruggling with, the attachment of all ranks in his army to his perſon, continued unſhaken. That during the inceſſant toils, difficulties, and dangers of this unfortunate campaign, no murmur, nor diſcontent of any kind, was expreſſed among the numbers who compoſed it, againſt any part of his conduct or behaviour. That when it was found their patience and courage had been exerted in vain, and that all hopes of ſucceſs were at an end, ſtill they were ready to follow him to the field, and to die with their arms in their hands.

A variety of particulars relating to this expedition, were alſo cleared up, entirely to his honour, and the removing of ſeveral charges and inſinuations to his diſadvantage.

There was, at the ſame time, a circumſtance mentioned, which the liberality of ſentiments of the witneſſes would not permit them to ſuppreſs. They made an explicit and candid acknowledgment of the courage and intrepid behaviour of the Americans; fully refuting thoſe ſcandalous ſurmiſes of their deficiency of ſpirit, that had been too readily adopted by thoſe who were unacquainted with their character, and that were no leſs ſhameful in thoſe who propagated or admitted them, than injurious and unjuſt to thoſe who ſuffered from ſo baſe and groundleſs an imputation.

It was remarked by numbers of the moſt judicious individuals in the nation, in conſequence of theſe parliamentary diſquiſitions into the conduct of Sir

William Howe and General Burgoyne, that the ſpirit of defamation lately gone forth, and that ſeemed particularly levelled at the moſt exalted characters in the naval and military line, would, if not checked in due time, produce the moſt fatal conſequences to the nation, by depriving it of its beſt officers, through the averſeneſs that would prevail among them, to undertake a ſervice attended with ſo much diſcouragement, and that expoſed every man whoſe good fortune did not come up to the full expectations that had been formed, to obloquy and ſlander without meaſure, and to be rendered by the baſeſt arts, an object of univerſal odium.

While theſe tranſactions were occupying the attention of the Houſe of Commons, that of the Lords was no leſs buſily taken up with thoſe inquiries and examinations into the ſtate of the navy, which had, in the preceding ſeſſion, occaſioned ſo many debates among them.

What rendered the inquiry now carrying on in the Houſe of Lords the more remarkable, was the perſon who exerted the moſt activity in bringing it forward. This was the Earl of Briſtol, a nobleman whoſe life, through a complication of infirmities and diſeaſes, was evidently drawing to a ſpeedy end; but whoſe reſolution and induſtry remained unbroken to the laſt.

He was chiefly aſſiſted in this tedious and difficult buſineſs, by the Duke of Bolton, and the Duke of Richmond. This latter nobleman was obliged, in his abſence, to ſupply his place in ſome of the moſt intricate parts.

The firſt ſtep that was taken, was to demand the official papers and documents neceſſary for ſuch an inveſtigation. Here again a refuſal was made, on the ground ſo often pleaded, of the danger that would

would ariſe from diſcloſing, in ſo public a manner, the actual ſtate of the navy in ſuch a critical time.

This refuſal was reſented with the utmoſt vehemence by the Earl of Briſtol, in whoſe name the demand for papers had been made. As ſoon as he was able, he repaired to the Houſe; and, notwithſtanding he was ſo weak, as to be unable to ſtand without crutches, he ſpoke with a ſtrength and animation that ſtruck the whole Houſe with amazement.

The ſpeech he made was full of the moſt bitter invectives againſt the Earl of Sandwich, whoſe conduct, as Firſt Lord of the Admiralty, he depicted in the moſt opprobrious colours. He explicitly gave notice, that his intent was to convict that nobleman of malverſation, and to effect his removal from the department wherein he now preſided.

Lord Sandwich, in a firm and ſpirited ſpeech, combated very circumſtantially the various attacks upon his adminiſtration, and declared that whatever errors he might have committed, he had it amply in his power to make it manifeſt to all the impartial and unprejudiced world, that he had acted in every branch of the department committed to his charge, with the ſtricteſt integrity, and the cleareſt endeavours to benefit the public.

In the courſe of the debates occaſioned by this ſubject, a moſt violent diſcuſſion took place on the appointment of a commander in chief over the grand fleet, intended for the Channel and Home ſervice.

The perſon appointed to this high and important ſtation, was Sir Charles Hardy, a brave and experienced officer; but now advanced in years, and who had long retired from the active ſcenes of a naval life, with an intention never to return to them. He was at this time Governor of Greenwich Hoſpital.

It was aſſerted by oppoſition, that the conſequences of the behariour of thoſe who preſided at the Admiralty were alarming in the moſt ſerious degree. They had driven from the ſervice of their country the moſt eminent officers in the navy. They were now reduced to the neceſſity of applying to an elderly gentleman, broken with age and infirmities, to accept of a command from which he would gladly have been excuſed.

But ſuch, it was ſaid, was the rancour with which men of real merit and elevated minds were perſecuted, for not bowing with meanneſs and ſervility to the caprice and preſumption of people in power, that ſooner than employ ſuch men, however their abilities were wanted in theſe calamitous times, they would hazard the ſafety, and the very exiſtence of the ſtate, by committing its defence to perſons much inferiorly qualified, and who were univerſally known to be paſt that time of life and ſtrength which was requiſite for the great functions to which they were ſo imprudently called.

The Earl of Briſtol, according to the notice he had given, having collected the materials on which he intended to reſt his charges againſt the Earl of Sandwich, laid them before the Houſe on the day which had been appointed for that purpoſe. He accompanied them with a ſpeech, wherein he took great pains to enforce the propriety of diſplacing that nobleman. Among other particulars he ſtated, that a ſum of ſeven millions had been expended on the navy within the laſt ſeven years, above the proportion allotted in any like period before, and yet the navy was evidently on the decreaſe.

The Earl of Sandwich made a long and animated ſpeech in juſtification of his conduct. He repreſented the ſtate of the navy as vigorous and flouriſhing, from the number of large and capital ſhips it contained, much

much exceeding the dimenſions of thoſe conſtructed ſome years before. He poſitively denied the eſtimates and calculations made by the Earl of Briſtol reſpecting the charges and expences of building and repairing the navy.

The debate upon this occaſion was long, and accompanied with great warmth. The ſpeakers exerted themſelves on both ſides in a more than ordinary manner. On putting the queſtion, the motion for the removal of Lord Sandwich was rejected by a majority of ſeventy-eight, to thirty-nine.

This rejection produced a ſtrong proteſt, ſigned by twenty-five Lords. The Earl of Briſtol drew up a ſeparate one in his own behalf, wherein he entered into a detail of the motives that had induced him to propoſe the motion which had been rejected. It was the laſt public tranſaction with which that celebrated nobleman cloſed an active and variegated life.

It was obſerved by the public, in regard to theſe repeated inquiries into the ſtate of the navy, that whoever was in fault, one matter was clear, which was, that the truth, in all theſe diſquiſitions, was ſo difficult to come at, from the perplexed and endleſs mazes of accounts and examinations wherein it was involved, that true wiſdom would conſiſt in cordially forgetting and forgiving the various miſtakes into which the moſt intelligent are apt to fall, while there was reaſon to believe they were unintentional, and proceeding only from the inherent incapableneſs of human nature to excel in every reſpect.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIII.

Declaration of Spain in favour of America.

1779.

DURING theſe diſputes and contentions in Great Britain, the French miniſtry was ſedulouſly employed in procuring the acceſſion of Spain to the cauſe it had eſpouſed.

Experience had ſhown France, that notwithſtanding the hopes ſhe had conceived from her vaſt preparations, they were not adequate to the deſign ſhe had formed, of compaſſing the ſubmiſſion of Great Britain to the terms ſhe had planned in conjunction with the United States of America. She ſaw her commerce in evident danger of being totally ruined, and the reſources of her marine, of courſe, effectually deſtroyed. The danger was imminent and immediate. In the ſpace of one twelvemonth more, ſhe had every reaſon to apprehend that the fleets and privateers of Britain, were they to proceed as they had begun, would reduce her to ſuch diſtreſs, as to compel her to relinquiſh the object ſhe had ſo long kept in view.

In this extremity. ſhe reminded the Court of Spain of the obligations incumbent upon it, in virtue of the Family Compact. She repreſented the conſequences of ſuffering Great Britain once more to give the law to France. Were the French branch of the line of Bourbon to be thus humbled, the Spaniſh branch could not fail to participate in its humiliation. Thus they would both be degraded a ſecond time in the eyes of all Europe.

At

At the time when the Convention at Saratoga took place, the French miniſtry, which had long been waiting for ſuch an opportunity of coming to a rupture with Great Britain, immediately propoſed to the Spaniſh Court an union of their mutual ſtrength, in order to compel Great Britain to acknowledge the independence of America. The entire overthrow of the Britiſh power was laid before that Court as the infallible conſequence of ſuch a loſs as that of the vaſt dominions poſſeſſed by Great Britain in America. This would reduce it ſo low, that henceforth the Houſe of Bourbon might look upon itſelf as delivered from its capital enemy.

But the ſolicitations of the French miniſtry were not ſucceſsful. Spain did not at that time think it in any wiſe her intereſt to co-operate in the diſmemberment of the Britiſh empire. Several of her politicians were no leſs diſpoſed to look forward to future contingencies, than to conſult the ſeeming intereſt of the day. Theſe were by no means inclined to precipitate matters in a buſineſs that appeared to them to require mature deliberation. France was unuſually impatient to draw Spain into her meaſures upon this occaſion. This they were not ſurprized at, when they conſidered that its American poſſeſſions were but of ſmall importance comparatively to thoſe of Spain, and that the nature of them differed eſſentially from that of the dominions of the Spaniſh Crown in that vaſt hemiſphere.

The precedent of a ſucceſsful rebellion, was looked upon at the Court of Spain as too dangerous to be forwarded and encouraged in the manner propoſed by France. The poſſeſſions of Spain were in many reſpects ſimilar to thoſe of Great Britain in that part of the world. Should the preſent conteſt between them and that Crown terminate in its loſing them, an event ſo remarkable, could not fail to make

make an impreſſion on the inhabitants of the Spaniſh ſettlements in America.

Notwithſtanding the fidelity and ſubmiſſion profeſſed by the Spaniſh Colonies in America, there was reaſon to apprehend that the defection of the Britiſh Coloniſts, would be attended with pernicious effects. It was well known that there were turbulent ſpirits in many of the provinces of Spaniſh America. Theſe would not omit to avail themſelves of ſo ſtriking an inſtance of ſucceſs, to excite diſcontents and commotions, and would hold up the example of Britiſh America, to thoſe who were ſeditiouſly inclined, in order to animate them to tread in the ſame ſteps.

Were Spain to aſſiſt the Britiſh Colonies in their reſiſtance to the parent ſtate, and become inſtrumental in procuring their independence, it could not be doubted that Great Britain would loſe no opportunity to effect a ſimilar diſmemberment of the Spaniſh empire. A retaliation of this nature would become an immediate object of her politics; and her ſtrength was ſo great, that aided by the alliances ſhe might form in Europe, and by the inclination of thoſe multitudes whom views of perſonal intereſt might ſeduce from their allegiance in Spaniſh America, ſhe would with the more likelihood accompliſh a project of that nature, as ſhe would not probably attempt it till ſhe had taken the precaution to involve the Houſe of Bourbon in ſuch diſputes on the continent of Europe, as would require the full employment of its whole ſtrength by land, and preclude it from making any conſiderable exertions at ſea.

But excluſive of theſe conſiderations, which were evidently well founded, Spain ought no leſs to carry its views further than the preſent time. True it was, that a family compact ſubſiſted between the French and Spaniſh branches of the Houſe of Bourbon;

bon; but it was not irrevocable. It was founded much more on perſonal regard, than upon national intereſt. France and Spain, antecedently to the date of their being ruled by princes united by conſanguinity, had been as much noted for their reciprocal enmity, as any nations in Europe; the Engliſh themſelves were not more hoſtile to the French, than the Spaniards had been.

This ſpirit of mutual oppoſition, though laid for the preſent, might revive, and become as powerful in its operations, as in any preceding æras. There had already happened a breach between the two crowns: it had even taken place not long after the acceſſion of the very firſt Prince of the Houſe of Bourbon, that wore the Spaniſh crown. Circumſtances might alter ſo much, as to produce events of the like nature, perhaps much ſooner than expected. The temper and diſpoſition of the French and Spaniſh nations were notoriouſly oppoſite; and were in that reſpect remarkably ſuſceptible of diſlike and averſion. This antipathy of character, it was well known, had oftentimes produced moſt deplorable effects among the military claſſes of each power. Though embodied in the common ſervice of their reſpective ſovereigns, neither officers nor ſoldiers could live together on terms of friendſhip: their ſwords were inceſſantly drawn againſt each other in private quarrels. Where individuals were ſo ready to differ, it could not be expected but ſoon or late the public, of which they compoſed a part, would partake at laſt in this inimical frame of mind.

Were Spain and France again to become rivals, the former would, in ſuch caſe, have ample cauſe to repent its having co-operated in the diminution of the power of Great Britain, which was, from its intereſts and ſituation, much better calculated for an ally to Spain, than France; a connection with which

which was productive of much leſs profit either to individuals or to the public.

From theſe various motives it was repreſented as unadviſeable to be aiding in the downfall of a power, whoſe friendſhip might be found highly valuable upon future occaſions. In preſſing Spain with ſo much eagerneſs to join in its deſtruction, who could tell whether France itſelf had not an eye to what was now ſurmiſed, and did not ſecretly wiſh, by the depreſſion of Great Britain, to deprive Spain of the ſupport it would receive from that quarter, in caſe of a breach of that union which now ſubſiſted between the two crowns, much more than between the two nations?

Such were the reaſonings and ideas that prevailed among ſeveral of the members of the Spaniſh miniſtry, on the firſt application of the Court of France for its interference in favour of America.

In conſequence of the averſeneſs which was teſtified on the part of Spain, at that time, to coincide with the meaſures of France, the negotiations with the commiſſioners of the United States were carried on without its participation; and the alliance with them was concluded, and notified to the Court of London, without any previous conſultation with the Spaniſh miniſtry.

It was not till the greater part of the year ſeventy-eight was elapſed, that France reſumed her ſolicitations at Madrid. From whatever cauſe it might proceed, they were more ſucceſsful than before. The Spaniſh monarch was at laſt prevailed upon to make an offer of his mediation between France, North America, and Great Britain.

He acted upon this occaſion with great foreſight and circumſpection. He waited till the military and naval forces that had been employed in the late quarrel between Spain and Portugal, were returned from Brazil, and till the rich fleets from Mexico and

and Peru were ſafely arrived in the harbours of Spain. As ſoon as thoſe were ſecured, he aſſumed the character of mediator between the powers at war.

Great Britain was not averſe to his attempting a pacification upon ſuch terms as comported with her intereſt and dignity. A ſuſpicion however, was not groundleſsly entertained, that he would lean to the ſide of a prince of his family.

The terms propoſed by the Spaniſh Monarch were, that both parties ſhould immediately diſarm, and agree to an univerſal ceſſation of hoſtilities in all parts of the world: That all parties ſhould remain in poſſeſſion of the places and territories they occupied at the time this ſuſpenſion took place: That a meeting ſhould be appointed, where the miniſters of France and Great Britain ſhould ſettle their reſpective differences: That France ſhould not interfere in the ſettlement of the diſpute between Great Britain and the States of America, which ſhould be left entirely to the deciſion of Spain: That in the mean time, the American States ſhould be treated with on a footing of independency; and that in caſe an accommodation were not effected, hoſtilities ſhould not re-commence till a twelvemonth's notice had been given of ſuch an intention.

Theſe terms were by ſome politicians eſteemed far from diſadvantageous to Great Britain. That in particular which preſcribed a ceſſation of hoſtilities, was conſidered as highly favourable to this country. It would give time for the reſentment of the Americans to cool, and would afford opportunities to form ſuch plans of reconciliation with them, as might prove acceptable. By leaving the Britiſh forces in poſſeſſion of the places where they were ſtationed, beneficial conceſſions might be procured for the reſtoration of them. Were the negotiations to prove ineffectual, leiſure would be afforded to

Great Britain to put herſelf in a ſtronger ſtate of preparation for the renewal of hoſtilities; and not improbably to form a counter-alliance to that of France and America; which, by finding employment for the French armies, would neceſſarily weaken their naval force, to the great detriment of their American allies.

To theſe conſiderations was added, the probability that the Spaniſh monarch would not intereſt himſelf with ſo much warmth for the intereſts of the United States, as their French allies; and that poſſibly the conviction of the dangerous conſequences which would reſult to Spain, from a termination of the diſpute in favour of the Britiſh Colonies, would induce him to act rather with luke warmneſs in their concerns.

This motive in particular, it has been ſaid, rendered France itſelf ſomewhat indifferent in regard to this mediation. She accepted it in full confidence that the ſpirited diſpoſition of the Britiſh government would not comply with the propoſals of the Court of Spain.

Herein ſhe was not deceived. Notwithſtanding the candour and impartiality at firſt profeſſed by the Spaniſh miniſtry, the conditions it held out to Britain, in behalf of France, appeared ſo detrimental and injurious to this country, that they were, without heſitation, declared inadmiſſible.

On this declaration, Spain immediately determined to join the aſſociation of France and North America againſt Great Britain. This reſolution was taken ſo abruptly, on receiving the denial of the Britiſh Court to coincide with the meaſures propoſed, that it became evident the mediation that had been proferred was not founded on a ſufficient baſis of impartiality to render it ſafe and eligible. The intenton of the Court of Spain, ſeemed rather to dictate than to mediate. The terms of peace were

ſuch

ſuch as Great Britain could not liſten to, without detracting from the determination ſhe had taken to preſerve her reputation unſullied, whatever loſſes ſhe might incur through the events of war, and thoſe caſualties which neither human prudence can foreſee, nor valour prevent.

The rejection of the plan of pacification framed at Madrid, was an object of the utmoſt aſtoniſhment to the political world. It was fully underſtood every where, that the alternative of refuſing the mediation of Spain, would be an acceſſion of that power to the confederacy againſt Great Britain; and it was therefore univerſally imagined, that ſooner than expoſe herſelf to ſo manifeſt a riſk, ſhe would yield to neceſſity, and comply with the deciſions of that Court, rather than provoke its enmity.

Such indeed was the conduct which good policy ſeemed to preſcribe, in the opinion of the majority of people throughout Europe. To adopt any other was generally condemned as the effect of obſtinacy and preſumption.

But this opinion, though general, had many opponents. It was contended, that in public, as well as in private life, there were occurrences wherein ſtates, no leſs than individuals, were bound by the rules of honour and magnanimity to venture their deſtruction ſooner than forfeit the rank and reputation they had acquired. Illuſtrious precedents militated in favour of this idea, both in ancient and modern hiſtory. When the immenſe armies of Perſia invaded Greece of old, that brave people reſolved to periſh ſooner than ſubmit; though certainly every apparent chance was againſt them: they were but a handful in compariſon of their enemies; but they marched forth with a determination to die or to conquer. Armed with this reſolution they fought the battles of Marathon and Salamis, and triumphed over the greateſt power on earth.

The Romans had trod in their footſteps with equal ſucceſs. When nearly overwhelmed by the victorious arms of Carthage, they did not deſpond: they diſdained to offer any conditions of peace to their haughty enemy: they continued to face him with unabated courage; and through their invincible perſeverance in the midſt of loſſes and defeats, they at length overcame him.

In latter ages examples of the ſame kind were not wanting. Holland, in the laſt century, had withſtood in its juſt defence, the combined attacks of the two greateſt powers in Europe. In the century preceding, when the power of Spain was at its higheſt ſummit, and alone almoſt equal to that of all the reſt of Europe, England did not heſitate to go forth and oppoſe the vaſt armament ſhe had prepared for the conqueſt of this kingdom. Though incomparably inferior in ſtrength, and number of ſhipping, and of men, and every requiſite for ſo unequal and arduous a trial, ſhe gave Spain a meeting on the ocean, and through her courage and conduct proved invincible.

Her ſituation at preſent, compared with her circumſtances in thoſe days, was far preferable, even proportionably to the combination of enemies ſhe had now to encounter. The marine of Spain, it was computed, would make an actual addition of about ſixty ſhips of the line to that of France, beſides a few more that were conſtructing. This doubtleſs compoſed a formidable liſt; but though ſuperior in number of veſſels to that of Great Britain, it was not to be queſtioned this latter counted a much greater number of able ſeamen and experienced officers.

Thus, notwithſtanding the determination adopted by Great Britain might ſeem to be dictated by temerity, yet when it was duly conſidered, it would be found not unworthy of a wiſe and valiant people,

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who had weighed, with coolneſs and circumſpection, the reſpective ſituation of themſelves and of their enemies; and who ſaw good reaſons, upon mature deliberation, to hope they ſhould be able to ſtem the current now running ſo forcibly againſt them. They clearly perceived its violence would not be laſting; and muſt, from a variety of cauſes, loſe its ſtrength in a ſhort time; while their own, on the contrary, would increaſe by the diſcouragement their enemies would feel on finding themſelves incapable of overcoming them, and the conſequent diſunion ſuch a diſappointment would produce.

Such were the ideas entertained by many of the ſoundeſt heads in Europe. This triple alliance of France, Spain, and America, did not, in their apprehenſions, carry that intrinſic ſtrength and firmneſs, which is requiſite for the atchieving of great deſigns. Its appearance was much more formidable than its reality; and it evidently harboured the ſeeds of a ſpeedy diſſolution, or of an ineffectual ſubſiſtence.

The contrariety of character, inherent by nature, and every cauſe that operates moſt forcibly on the paſſions of men, marked in a particular manner every branch of the confederacy. United from motives of neceſſity on the one ſide, and of ambition on the other; each party cheriſhed its own ſeperate views, and paid little, if any, attention to thoſe of the other.

Independency and Freedom were the ſole objects of America. Provided theſe were ſecured, the grandour of the Houſe of Bourbon could not be ſuppoſed to dwell in the wiſhes of ſo ſenſible and judicious a people as the natives of the Britiſh Colonies. The liberal education and extenſive knowledge of politics, and of the European world, poſſeſſed by the leading and genteel claſſes among them, left no room to doubt, that could matters be ſet-

tled with Britain on the footing they propoſed, and every ſuſpicion of hoſtile intentions from that quarter thoroughly removed, an union with France and Spain againſt Britain, would be no deſirable object to them, either in point of intereſt or inclination.

Brought up in habits of antipathy againſt both thoſe nations, in the midſt of the continual ſuccours they were receiving, and expecting from them, they felt no cordiality for either. Nor could this be imputed to deficiency of proper ſentiments. They viewed France and Spain in too juſt a light, to aſcribe their protection to any other than the real motive, which was the deſire of humbling Great Britain. Generoſity and compaſſion for an oppreſſed and injured people, could not, in common reaſon, be ſuppoſed to influence ſuch abſolute and arbitrary Courts as thoſe of Verſailles or Madrid. It was their own intereſt, diveſted of all other conſiderations, that prompted them to eſpouſe the cauſe of the Britiſh Colonies.

Nor were either France or Spain ſo ignorant as to imagine, that the Britiſh Colonies were not duly ſenſible, from what impulſe they both acted in the preſent juncture. This reciprocal conſciouſneſs of the radical cauſes of the connection between them, prevented all mutual affection and cordiality; and weakened, in no ſmall degree, the confidence that was indiſpenſibly requiſite in the co-operations of the different parties.

The very principle on which the Britiſh Coloniſts founded the right of their reſiſtance, muſt indubitably have rendered them odious to their protectors. A right to oppoſe tyranny, and to caſt off ſubjection to princes who were guilty of oppreſſion, was a maxim which no man in France or Spain durſt avow. Yet ſuch was the foundation on which the Americans built their pretenſions to ſhake off their obedience to the Crown of Great Britain, and to apply for aſſiſtance to theſe powers.

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The fact was, that both theſe Courts conſidered them as rebels, who were deſerving of the ſevereſt chaſtiſement; but who, at the ſame time, happened to prove ſuch convenient inſtruments of their politics, that they were willing, in favour of that conſideration, to ſet aſide the unjuſtifiableneſs of their conduct, and afford them the ampleſt countenance.

Another potent motive to break the force of this alliance, beſides the difference of government and political notions, was the immenſe diſparity of habits, manners, ideas, and diſpoſition; and eſpecially of religion. Theſe all contributed to alienate the minds of thoſe new allies, and to render them unfriendly to each other, in proportion as they became more intimately acquainted. Thus the very progreſs of their connection was inimical to its duration, and the longer they remained united, the ſtronger of courſe became the incentives for a ſeparation.

It was fully foreſeen, that the pride and loftineſs of a monarchical ſpirit, would not fail to be offenſive to republicans when taken under its protection. Undervaluing ſuch a government, it would be apt to treat its members with ſlight. Theſe, on the other hand, impatient of the leaſt want of attention, would retort this uſage without heſitation. Hence diſſatisfaction would ariſe, and concord would be looſened.

But were the Americans, from views of immediate intereſt, willing to connive at the ſuperiority that might be aſſumed by the two monarchies that ſupported them, would theſe very monarchies themſelves act altogether with that reciprocal coincidence in each others plans and meaſures, that would be neceſſary for the compaſſing of their common deſigns? Would no jealouſies or complaints intervene? Would their commanders agree? Would

their officers, or their very people, combine in a reciprocation of ſervice?

It was well remembered by many, with what little unanimity they had acted upon former occaſions againſt a common enemy. The campaigns in Italy, in favour of the pretenſions of the very monarch now ſitting on the Spaniſh Throne, ought to have convinced him how little reliance could be placed on the joint efforts of two nations, ſo diſcordant in every reſpect as the Spaniards and the French.

So ſtrong and inſuperable was the mutual averſion of theſe two people, that it was much to be queſtioned, whether the loſſes and defeats that might befall the one, in the courſe of this very war carried on by their joint auſpices, would not prove an acceptable event to the other; ſo little were the hearts or hands of the commonalty united, whatever conformity of ſentiments exiſted in their reſpective ſovereigns or miniſters.

It were even much to be doubted, whether the Americans themſelves, in caſe Great Britain ſhould recognize their independence, and grant them a favourable accommodation, would not view the ill ſucceſs of their French and Spaniſh allies with ſecret ſatisfaction; ſo reverſe and irreſiſtible is the ſtrength of native and habitual prepoſſeſſions, and ſo prone is human nature to recur to thoſe habits, and return to that track of thinking and acting to which it has been uſed from its infancy.

Reflections of this kind prevented the conduct of the Britiſh miniſtry from being branded with temerity for reſolving to face the potent confederacy that now threatened them; and for not even deigning to hint the leaſt deſire of treating upon ſuch terms as did not accord with the plan of conciliation they had offered to the Colonies, or indeed of entering into any treaty at all.

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Whatever errors the Britiſh miniſtry might have committed in its former conduct towards the Colonies, and whatever might be the dangers to which their preſent conduct expoſed them, it was not without admiration that Europe beheld the invincible fortitude with which they met the dreadful ſtorm now ready to burſt upon them. Britain, it was now aſſerted, even among its enemies, had diſplayed a truly Roman ſpirit. Like that reſolute and aſpiring people, it preferred deſtruction to the loſs of its grandeur, and thought it a leſs misfortune to ſurrender its exiſtence than its glory.

Such were the ſentiments attributed to this nation by ſome of the greateſt politicians in Europe: nor were they ill founded. The greatneſs of the peril did not ſeem to make that impreſſion upon the minds of the public, which the enemies of this country had expected. The means of facing them were much more the object of its contemplation, than the dangers and difficulties that would attend ſo daring a reſolution.

Still, however, a man of ſuperior genius, and above all perſonal views, ſeemed wanting to direct the ſpirit and manage efficaciouſly the reſources of the Britiſh nation. But where to find him,—or, if found, how to bring forward a man of ſuch a character, appeared an inſurmountable taſk to thoſe who conſidered the diſunited, factious, and corrupted ſtate of the people at large. If they reſembled the Romans in their pride and loftineſs of mind, they preſerved an equal reſemblance in thoſe parts of their character that occaſioned their ruin. The rage and animoſity inſpired by continual diſſentions, were riſen to ſo outrageous a height, that neither virtue nor abilities were accounted ſuch in their poſſeſſors by thoſe who were of a contrary party. The tide of reciprocal oppoſition was ſo ſtrong, as to overwhelm all other con-

ſiderations. Good or bad qualities were indiſcriminately overlooked in the general confuſion of thoſe diſtracted times, and hardly any other qualification was become valuable, or was mentioned as the teſt of merit in any man, than that of adhering faithfully to the party he had choſen.

In the midſt of theſe domeſtic ſtorms, the far greater number of individuals who ſpeculated throughout Europe on the affairs of Britain, made no doubt it would inevitably periſh. The native intrepidity of its people, the courage and expertneſs of its military and naval claſſes, the abilities of its commanders, the greatneſs of its reſources; all theſe might buoy it up a while, but its internal diſcords would ſink it at laſt: They were a weight too heavy to be borne, when added to the many others under which it laboured, and would alone contribute more to cruſh it than all other cauſes collectively.

It was hardly poſſible, indeed, for thoſe to think otherwiſe who were witneſſes of the daily violence that ſhook, as it were, both Houſes of Parliament. In former days, though warmth and impetuoſity in maintaining their oppoſite opinions, had doubtleſs characterized the contending members; they ſtill kept, however, within the bounds of decency; they did not diſgrace their eloquence by employing it in the loweſt invectives. But ſtrength and dignity of expreſſion were now converted into virulence and extremity of abuſe. Perſonal defamation, and every circumſtance that could affront and inſult the character of individuals, and expoſe them to public contempt, were now accounted the moſt eſſential and forcible talents in a ſpeaker.

The integrity and upright intentions of thoſe who were at the helm of national affairs, had long been held in high repute by foreign nations; but this was now entirely deſtroyed by thoſe unguarded reproaches and recriminations with which the Parliamentary debates were attended. When they beheld

held the groſs and indecent manner with which the different parties treated each other, when they heard the detail of thoſe accuſations with which they alternately ſtrove to render themſelves odious, they loſt the reſpect and veneration which they had once entertained for that aſſembly, and viewed it as a ſet of factious, turbulent individuals, actuated merely by perſonal motives, and regardleſs of that public for which they pretended ſo much concern.

The zeal that had been expreſſed againſt the meaſures of miniſtry, was looked upon as proceeding from diſcontent at not poſſeſſing their places, much more than from conviction of their impropriety.—Whatever determinations might have been adopted by men in power reſpecting America, oppoſition, it was ſaid, would have condemned them, whether lenient or coercive. As the individuals of this party could not compaſs the diſcarding of their antagoniſts, they were determined to throw every impediment in their way, and to prevent any of their meaſures from proſpering.

Such were the ideas entertained of the Britiſh Parliament by many of the moſt judicious foreigners. They accounted for their depravity by recurring to thoſe cauſes that had in days of old been aſſigned as the fountain of Roman degeneracy;—exceſſive opulence, followed by its uſual concomitant, boundleſs luxury. Enriched to a degree unknown in other countries, through the immenſe commerce eſtabliſhed by the vaſt ſucceſſes of the laſt war, Great Britain was now become the receptacle of all thoſe arts and refinements that contribute to the delight and enjoyment of life. They were carried to the moſt coſtly and ſtudious exceſs that wealth could procure. All claſſes and degrees purſued them with an avidity and fondneſs that knew no reſtraint.

This univerſal addiction to pleaſure, had operated a ſtriking change in the manners and character of the

the nation. Amuſement and diſſipation had taken place of that ſerioufneſs and ſolidity of diſpoſition for which it had formerly been ſo remarkable. The Engliſh were in many reſpects become another people. They had caſt off the plainneſs and ſimplicity of their ancient manner of living, and adopted the moſt expenſive and luxurious that wealth and wantonneſs could jointly ſupport and deviſe.

Plunged in the various exceſſes ariſing from the intemperance of their enjoyments, individuals were now ſo wedded to them, that they were deemed neceſſary concomitants of life, without which the poſſeſſion of it would be taſteleſs and inſipid, and with which therefore they would not part upon any account. Such a ſtile of living neceſſarily occaſioned a multitude of expences unknown before.—Incomes were ſtretched to their utmoſt bearing to ſupply the demands it created. But as profuſion is an evil that gathers vigour from its growth, and has a peculiar tendency to ſpread the moſt extenſive infection, this expenſiveneſs excited a fatal emulation, and arrived at length to ſuch a pitch, as to over-top the means of the generality of thoſe who conformed with ſo deſtructive a faſhion.

But it was become ſo prevalent, that the pride of people was intereſted in adhering to it. As a renunciation would have betrayed a diminution of affluence, and as the times were ſuch as rendered a ſuſpicion of that ſort ignominious, no man would ſubmit to incur it. Hence flowed a proſtitution of perſonal influence and abilities, in order to purchaſe the means of continuing in that career of profuſeneſs.

In this manner venality, that had hitherto been reſtricted within limits, and attended with a degree of ſhame, was viewed no longer as a diſgrace. It was reduced into a ſyſtem, and openly practiſed with impunity, and without pains to conceal it.

Such were the deſcriptions drawn by numbers of foreigners, and not a few of our own people, of the ſtate of this country at that period. They inferred from thence, that it was vain and groundleſs to indulge any expectation of its being able, in circumſtances of ſo much profligacy, and want of both public and private virtue, to produce a ſufficient ſtock of unanimity and concord in the executive, any more than in the deliberative power, to reſiſt the weight of that ponderous impreſſion which the multitude of ſo many enemies could not fail to make.

Thoſe, on the other hand, who thought more favourably of the iſſue of this conteſt to Britain, founded their ideas on the precedents afforded in hiſtory. Rome, for inſtance, notwithſtanding the feuds and commotions with which it was perpetually agitated, ſtill continued to proſper, and to overcome all her enemies abroad.

Allowing that much of the ancient rigidneſs of public virtue was departed, much ſtill remained, in ſpite of the continual clamours of the diſcontented and the diſſaffected part of the nation. True it was that intereſtedneſs prevailed, and that votes were often ſold; but even this, though far from excuſable, was no proof that thoſe very individuals who acted in this ſhameful manner, were not in other reſpects warm friends to their country, and ready to venture their perſons and all they poſſeſſed in its defence.

The motives that influenced the Parliamentary conduct of individuals, ſhould not be ſcrutinized without great allowance for times and circumſtances. Perſonal connections ought to preſerve a due influence, even in the moſt public tranſactions. The character of men was a ſufficient and warrantable inducement to approve of their meaſures, and to place an implicit confidence in their integrity, as well as in their abilities.

Great

Great Britain was the region of parties. No period could be cited wherein they did not exiſt with more or leſs of violence; yet experience had ſhown, that there were perſons of the higheſt merit in all parties. Patriots had been found among the favourers, as well as among the opponents of people in power.

Notwithſtanding the Parliamentary altercations were ſometimes carried to an indecent length, it ought to be remembered, that objects of great magnitude tended naturally to inflame the paſſions of thoſe who differed in opinion concerning them. Never had objects of greater importance been agitated within the walls of the Britiſh Parliament than at the preſent day. The loſs or preſervation of one moiety of the empire was now in queſtion. Was it ſurpriſing that in diſcuſſions ariſing from ſo intereſting a cauſe, wherein every man felt himſelf ſo deeply and immediately concerned, people ſhould not retain the ſame calmneſs as in ordinary matters? This could not be expected in ſo free and high ſpirited a nation.

It could not be doubted, from the undauntedneſs that had already been diſplayed on the acceſſion of France to the preſent conteſt, that the ſame firmneſs and determination to encounter all difficulties, would ſtill ſubſiſt. Having deliberately reſolved to meet them, the character of the Britiſh nation was too well known, to imagine that any exertions would be wanting on its part to render fortune propitious. It was called upon by every motive that could animate a brave and illuſtrious people. The remembrance of its late triumphs on land and ſea in ſo many parts of the globe; the neceſſity of preſerving the empire of the ocean, ſo long the ſcene of its power and glory; the protection of its immenſe commerce, which was the ſource of its wealth and grandeur, and the principal pillar of that rank and reputation

reputation it had hitherto maintained with ſuch unrivalled ſucceſs and ſplendor.

Add to theſe conſiderations the keenneſs of the reſentment the Engliſh muſt feel againſt the French, for having conſpired with their revolted ſubjects in tearing from them the ſovereignty of America. The manner in which France accompliſhed this deſign rendered it peculiarly offenſive. Under cover of the moſt ſpecious proteſtations of neutrality, it had carried on a ſeries of intrigues founded on a duplicity unworthy of its character.

However ſanguine the French might be in their expectations, they would find, that notwithſtanding the co-operation of Spain and America, the chief of the conteſt would lie between them and their ancient rivals. On them the ſtrength and efforts of theſe would be principally directed; and paſt experience had ſhown the activity and reſources of theſe rivals to be uncommon and formidable in the higheſt degree.

America was at a vaſt diſtance, and incapable of any offenſive operations of any conſequence out of its own territories. Spain, in the late war, had proved an inſufficient aid. Should Britain ſuſpend its hoſtilities on the American continent, and direct its fleets and armies againſt the dominions of the Houſe of Bourbon, in the Weſt Indies, it would be no eaſy taſk to prevent them from falling into the hands of that reſolute and enterpriſing enemy.

The French had not hitherto maniteſted an equal degree of diligence or ſkill, when compared with that which had been exerted by the Engliſh ſince the declaration of France in favour of America. Notwithſtanding the advantages of coming freſh into the conteſt againſt an enemy already fatigued with three expenſive and arduous campaigns, yet ſhe found him prepared to meet her with an alacrity and vigour which ſhe confidently hoped he had loſt.

It

It was well known that this unexpected diſappointment had not a little damped the ſpirit, and abated the confidence of the French. They were a people quick in their formation of the moſt flattering proſpects, but apt to be caſt down on the leaſt failure; they were eaſily elated, but ſtill more eaſily depreſſed; not from want of courage, but from want of patience to contend with obſtacles that threatened difficulty and duration, and required great labour and perſeverance to ſurmount.

The Engliſh were, on the contrary, of a quite oppoſite character: bold and daring, yet circumſpectful; enterprifing, yet not precipitate; cool and deliberate in framing their reſolutions, but firm and determined in executing them; they met obſtructions with temper, and ſubmitted to hardſhips with fortitude: their intrepidity was accompanied with a calmneſs that fitted them peculiarly for ſeaſons of danger. They bore diſappointments undiſmayed; and from the experience of the preſent time, it was plain they could face the ſevereſt trials without deſpondency.

The formidable confederacy before which France had preſumptuouſly thought that Great Britain muſt bend without any further heſitation, had only doubled her exertions, and exalted her courage: her firmneſs ſeemed to increaſe in proportion to her peril; and inſtead of humbling herſelf before ſo many enemies, ſhe evidently ſet them all at defiance.

As no nation had ever exhibited greater proofs of magnanimity, none had at the ſame time taken bolder and more deciſive meaſures againſt its numerous foes. It ſeemed determined, ſhould Fate have decreed its fall, to periſh nobly, and to leave a name unſullied and reſpectable to all future ages.

Such were the various ſentiments and opinions of the many individuals in Europe, whoſe thoughts and ſpeculations were taken up with the critical ſituation

tion of this country, at the time when Spain declared its acceſſion to the alliance of France and of America againſt Britain.

This declaration was made to the Britiſh miniſtry by the Spaniſh Ambaſſador at the Court of London, upon the ſixteenth day of June, ſeventy-nine.

Notwithſtanding ſuſpicions had long been entertained of the hoſtile intentions of the Court of Spain, yet the conſideration how repugnant it was to the intereſt of that monarchy to act inimically to this country, kept people's minds in ſuſpence how the joint ſolicitations of the French and American miniſters at that Court would terminate.

The Reſcript delivered to the Britiſh miniſtry by the Marquis of Almadovar, Ambaſſador from Spain, was a compoſition of a vague and deſultory nature, wanting in clearneſs and preciſion, and attended with no accuracy or ſtrength of reaſoning: the facts ſtated carried no weight nor conviction, and did not appear to afford juſt cauſes for ſo ſerious and violent a meaſure as a rupture between the two nations.

It ſet forth, that the King of Spain had uſed his utmoſt endeavours to bring about a reconciliation between Great Britain and the powers with which ſhe was at war, but that they had been rejected in a manner that manifeſted an hoſtile diſpoſition in that Court.

It repreſented the conduct of the Britiſh miniſtry reſpecting the mediation it had accepted on the part of Spain, as diſingenuous, and tending only to protract it by vain pretences and evaſive anſwers.

It complained of inſults offered to the Spaniſh flag, and violation of the territory of Spain in America; it ſtated that reparation had been demanded for theſe outrages, but that none had been received; and what was very remarkable, it ſpecified that the various

various injuries done to Spain by Great Britain amounted to one hundred!

Such was the ſubſtance of the Spaniſh Reſcript; which intimated at the ſame time, that the intereſts of Spain and France were ſo blended, as to require their being comprized in one ſettlement, in any future treaty with Great Britain.

The complaints contained in this Reſcript were anſwered in a very forcible and circumſtantial manner, in a paper that was tranſmitted to the Spaniſh Ambaſſador after his departure.

But whatever pretences were alledged by Spain for breaking the peace with England, it was very clearly underſtood that the real motive was to embrace the favourable opportunity of depreſſing Great Britain, now offered by the defection of its Colonies.

Very ſevere reflections were paſſed on this occaſion upon the conduct of miniſtry by the members of oppoſition in Parliament. Now at length, it was ſaid, that ſyſtem was completed which had been ſo often predicted, but which miniſters exploded as groundleſs and imaginary. The Family Compact between the French and Spaniſh branches of the Houſe of Bourbon, was now fulfilled in all its parts; and Great Britain, the principal object of that family's dread and averſion, was to experience the firſt effects of that dangerous combination.

But however pointed and acrimonious the ſpeeches of oppoſition were, all parties felt the neceſſity of union on this emergency. Both Houſes concurred firmly and unanimouſly in the reſolution to ſupport with the utmoſt ſpirit and vigour the war denounced againſt this country by the Houſe of Bourbon.

In conſequence of the delivery of the Spaniſh reſcript to the miniſtry, its contents were laid before both Houſes in the King's name, with a ſolemn declaration

declaration on his part, of the real deſire he had always entertained and expreſſed to cultivate peace and harmony with that crown, and how much he was ſurprized at the pretences on which the declaration was founded. Several of the grievances complained of had not been communicated by any channel previous to this reſcript. Whenever applications had been made, they had been received with all due attention, and nothing had been omitted to procure all requiſite ſatisfaction.

In anſwer to the royal meſſage, which was worded with great temper and dignity, after preſenting an addreſs to the Throne, containing their determination to exert all the powers and reſources of Britain againſt its enemies, it was moved in the Houſe of Commons, that another addreſs ſhould be preſented at the ſame time, requeſting that the naval and military forces of the kingdom ſhould be collected in ſuch a manner, that its whole united ſtrength might be exerted againſt the Houſe of Bourbon.

This motion was ſupported upon the great neceſſity of making the principal impreſſion upon that quarter, and the improbability of doing it effectually while the force of this country remained ſcattered and divided at ſuch an immenſe diſtance. To continue our efforts in America in the ſame manner as before, muſt weaken them in Europe, where it was evident they were much more wanted at preſent, that we had to contend with ſo powerful a combination of enemies, whoſe fleets and armies were now menacing our very coaſts, and threatening an invaſion of the kingdom itſelf.

Miniſtry oppoſed this motion on the ground of its interfering with the royal prerogative of directing excluſively all active meaſures. Were even ſuch a meaſure proper to be adopted, an open compliance with the requeſt now propoſed, would involve a notification of it to the enemy, that might prove highly

prejudicial. It was much more adviſeable, on all accounts, to leave the executive power to act in ſuch matters at full liberty: to aſſume the right of controuling its operations, would check and retard them in ſuch a manner, as might fruſtrate the beſt concerted ſchemes.

The ſetting aſide of this motion was very diſpleaſing to numbers, who were firmly convinced that the ſtationing the fleets and armies of the realm ſo far aſunder, would prevent them from being of that eſſential ſervice they would prove, were they at hand to co-operate. America was now conſidered by many as an object no longer deſerving of that ſolicitude which it had ſo long occupied. The difficulty, or rather the impracticability of recovering it, was obvious, while the nation was engaged in a war with both France and Spain. A war with two ſuch formidable powers, was of itſelf an object of ſufficient magnitude to employ the whole attention and forces of Great Britain: to divide them would be to render them impotent and uſeleſs. The utmoſt that could be propoſed, was to keep poſſeſſion of what ſtill remained in our hands on the American continent, but by no means to make it the ſcene of our principal operations.

In addition to this idea, the propriety of which was warmly maintained on this occaſion, it was ſuggeſted that at ſo dangerous a criſis as the preſent, all perſonal animoſities ought to give way to the ſervice and ſafety of the ſtate; that it behoved all parties to unite in ſo neceſſary a purpoſe. To this intent, it was incumbent on miniſtry to uſe their utmoſt endeavour to recall to their different ſtations in the army and navy, thoſe individuals whoſe diſcontents had induced them to throw up their employments: no man of courage and abilities ought to be overlooked or ſlighted at this perilous ſeaſon; ſuch men eſpecially as Lord Howe and Admiral Keppel

Keppel ſhould not be ſuffered to remain unemployed; and no means ſhould be left untried to prevail upon them to reſume their functions.

In the Houſe of Lords the ſame ideas were prevalent as in the Houſe of Commons, among the members in oppoſition. The Duke of Richmond in particular ſpoke ſtrenuouſly on this occaſion, for a total alteration of the ſyſtem that had hitherto been purſued in America. He repreſented that country as the fatal drain of the blood and treaſures of Britain, and as the unhappy ſource of the diſſentions that filled both parliament and nation: were the meaſures that had been carried on at ſo immenſe a coſt in that country, to be ſuſpended, and a vigorous exertion to enſue of the reſources poſſeſſed by Great Britain, they were ſo manifold, that when thoroughly weighed and inſpected, they would be found fully adequate not only to reſiſt, but to overcome and defeat the whole naval ſtrength of the Houſe of Bourbon.

In conſequence of this repreſentation, he moved that an amendment ſhould accompany the addreſs to be preſented to the Throne, expreſſing that in ſo aweful a ſituation as that wherein this country ſtood at preſent, its ſtrength ought no longer to be divided and waſted in a fruitleſs and ruinous civil war; the proſecution of which would expoſe it to the attempts of its numerous enemies, who would not fail to take advantage of the abſence of ſo large a proportion of our fleets and armies in a diſtant part of the world, and invade us while enfeebled by ſo conſiderable a deprivation of our ſtrength: the only means therefore of reſiſting ſo potent a confederacy, was to relinquiſh that ſyſtem of hoſtilities in America which had been productive of ſo many calamities, and involved this country in ſuch imminent and unprecedented danger.

The Duke of Richmond's motive for confining his motion to a change of ſyſtem, without including a removal of miniſters, was to obtain, by this proof of moderation and diſintereſtedneſs, their more ready concurrence in his propoſals. A diſmiſſion of the preſent miniſtry was, however, inſiſted upon with great warmth by ſeveral other Lords in the oppoſition.

The arguments alledged by miniſtry, for diſſenting from the Duke of Richmond's propoſal for a ceſſation of hoſtilities in America, were, that ſuch a meaſure would appear as a renunciation to all hopes of recovering that country, the ſovereignty of which was an object of too much conſequence to abandon without the moſt violent and reſolute ſtruggle to retain it. Herein the honour of the nation was the more deeply concerned, as France and America had made it an eſſential article in their treaty of confederacy, that they ſhould agree to no terms of pacification, till Great Britain had ſolemnly recognized the independency of the United States. Hence it was clear, that to withdraw our armies would not accelerate a reconciliation upon thoſe terms we demanded: and as the dignity of the nation required that we ſhould accede to no others, it was proper that we ſhould retain the means of inforcing them by keeping our forces in America.

After a long and intereſting debate, wherein much eloquence and acuteneſs of reaſoning were diſplayed on both ſides, and were attended with no little acrimony and perſonal invective, the amendment to the addreſs moved by the Duke of Richmond was negatived by a majority of fifty-ſeven to fifty-two.

The imminent peril to which the kingdom was now expoſed, occaſioned a variety of military projects to be laid before Parliament, for the purpoſe of its internal defence. The principal one that was adopted, was the raiſing of volunteer companies, which

which were to be added to the regiments of militia belonging to the counties where they were raiſed.

It had been propoſed at firſt to double the number of the militia, which would at once produce ſuch an augmentation of force, as would, in conjunction with the regular troops, conſtitute a moſt formidable army; but upon mature reflection, the ſtanding eſtabliſhment of regulars and militia appeared fully ſufficient for the guard of the kingdom, eſpecially when reinforced by the additional companies to be raiſed in every county.

A motive for not increaſing the militia, was, that a meerly defenſive war did not ſeem the moſt eligible meaſure in the preſent circumſtances. As it was determined to carry it on with the utmoſt activity and vigour, it would, in conſequence of ſuch a reſolve, be neceſſary to ſend a number of troops out of the kingdom upon the various expeditions that would be undertaken: theſe muſt of courſe be compoſed of, and drafted from the regular forces, which would therefore demand continual recruiting to ſupply the place of thoſe who were ſent abroad. In order to raiſe theſe recruits with the more facility, it was judged more adviſable to leave the militia on its actual footing, than to increaſe it, as the numbers wanted for that purpoſe would be more uſefully employed in filling the vacancies in the regular regiments, and keeping them up to their full complement.

The ſpirit and magnanimity that were diſplayed at this perilous time, fully anſwered the prognoſtications of thoſe politicians both at home and abroad, who had confidently predicted that the combination formed againſt Britian, would ſerve much leſs to intimidate it, than to ſhew its amazing reſources; and would ſhortly make it evident, that the proſpects in which its enemies had been ſo forward to indulge their imaginations, were founded on their

ignorance of the real ſituation of this country, and the diſpoſition of its people; of the greatneſs of its intrinſic wealth, and the readineſs of individuals to employ it with the moſt boundleſs generoſity for the common defence.

Animated with this laudable ſpirit, all parts of the kingdom exhibited a zeal and promptitude to concur in every meaſure neceſſary for the protection of the realm, that baniſhed all deſpondency and fear. People of rank and affluence acted every where with a liberality which ſoon evinced that no funds would be wanting in this critical exigency. Companies were raiſed, and regiments were formed upon the plans that had been propoſed, and every preparation made to meet the utmoſt efforts of the enemy.

CHAP. XLIV.

Military Operations in North America.

1779.

THE ſucceſs of the Britiſh arms in reducing Georgia had revived the hopes of the Loyaliſts in the neighbouring provinces of Carolina. As a conſiderable part of them conſiſted of emigrants from Britain, notwithſtanding they had, through compulſion, ſubmitted to the adverſe party, they were conſtantly watching an opportunity of caſting off a yoke, to which their diſpoſitions could not be reconciled, and of returning to the ſubjection of their native country.

On hearing of the reduction of Georgia, and the arrival of General Prevoſt, they determined to riſe in a body. They aſſembled accordingly on the back frontiers of North Carolina, with an intent to maintain their ground in that province, till they could be joined by reinforcements from Georgia.

But the diſtance from thence to the place where they embodied was ſo great, that it was impracticable to anſwer their expectations with ſufficient diſpatch to ſupport their undertaking. It was ſoon fruſtrated by the ſuperior ſtrength of the enemy in their neighbourhood: they were attacked and totally routed with the loſs of about half their number.

The remainder, finding the ſtrength of the enemy continually increaſing, and expecting no further aſſiſtance from their own party in that quarter, reſolved to make their way to Georgia. They effected this reſolution with great courage and conſtancy

through a variety of difficulties, and had the good fortune to join the royal forces in that Province.

As the number of troops under General Prevoſt, was not ſufficient to form any ſtrong chain of communication with thoſe diſtricts that were remote from the capital, he was obliged to contract his poſts in order to preſerve his ſtrength.

This was the more indiſpenſibly neceſſary, as General Lincoln was arrived on the borders of Georgia with a conſiderable force, and encamped within twenty miles of Savannah town, the Britiſh head quarters.

Another ſtrong body of Americans was poſted at a further diſtance, on the river of that name, at a place called Briar's Creek; where it covered the upper part of Georgia, and prevented any aſſociations being formed in favour of the Britiſh intereſt.

Colonel Prevoſt, a relation of the General of that name, was ſtationed at Hudſon Ferry, on the Savannah river, twelve miles below Briar's Creek. The proximity of the American corps at this place, induced him to form a deſign of ſurprizing it. To this intent General Prevoſt made ſeveral motions in the neighbonrhood of Savannah town, in order to divert the attention of General Lincoln, and remove all ſuſpicion of the project in agitation.

In the mean time, Colonel Prevoſt ordered a diviſion of his forces to advance towards Briar's Creek, to the purpoſe of feigning an attack upon the American body poſted there; with the other diviſion he took a circuit of near fifty miles, to the enemy's right, with a view, after croſſing Briar's Creek, where it was fordable, to come ſuddenly upon their rear.

The ſituation of the Americans at Briar's Creek was ſo advantageous, that they entertained no apprehenſions of being forced: the Creek extended along their front, and was for ſome miles of too great

great a depth to ford. The river Savannah, with a deep ſwamp on each ſide, covered their left; and they had a body of cavalry on their right, to keep a look out on the adjacent country.

It happened, unfortunately for them, that on the approach of Colonel Prevoſt with his diviſion, this very body had been detached to a conſiderable diſtance on the oppoſite quarter. This favoured the Colonel's deſign ſo completely, that he came upon them undiſcovered, in the middle of day: they were attacked in their camp, and inſtantly put to the rout every where: a body from North Carolina rallied, and attempted to make a ſtand; but after a brave reſiſtance, they were alſo defeated.

March 30, 1779.

The victory was complete in every reſpect: the enemy loſt their artillery and ſtores, their baggage, and almoſt all their arms; beſides about four hundred killed and taken, among the latter of whom were many officers: numbers were drowned in the river Savannah, and periſhed in the ſwamps, in their endeavouring to eſcape.

By this ſucceſs the province of Georgia was again freed from the enemy, and a communication thrown open with the well-affected in the back ſettlements of this and the neighbouring Colonies of Carolina. Several bodies of them joined General Prevoſt, and proved no ſmall addition to his army: in conſequence of which he ſtretched his poſts further up the river Savannah, and ſecured the principal paſſes over it. By theſe means, the forces which had been collected by the enemy on the other ſide, were conſtrained to remain inactive, as the paſſage was too dangerous to be attempted in preſence of the force that now guarded it.

General Prevoſt, in the mean while, was employed in obſerving their movements, intending, as ſoon as an opportunity offered, to make an attempt on

on the Province of Carolina. He was, after ſome expectation, favoured with one that opened a new and very unexpected ſcene.

A meeting of the Delegates of the Province of Georgia had been appointed to be held in the beginning of May. As the capital was now in the poſſeſſion of the Britiſh troops, the meeting was tranſferred to Auguſta, a town ſituated one hundred and thirty miles from that of Savannah. In order to be at hand to protect this aſſembly, General Lincoln marched his army to the neighbourhood of that town.

The ſituation he quitted lay between the lower parts of Georgia and Carolina, and effectually prevented any attempt from the Britiſh troops on that ſide. But by leaving it, the way was immediately opened for the deſign that General Prevoſt had in contemplation.

The face of the country was ſuch, indeed, at this time of the year, as powerfully diſcouraged any military operations. The river Savannah, which is the boundary between thoſe two Provinces, was ſo ſwelled and increaſed by the rains and freſhes, that it ſeemed utterly impaſſable. On the Carolina ſide the country was either ſo flooded or ſwampy, that it appeared impoſſible for an army to march through it.

Beſides theſe natural obſtructions, General Lincoln had left a ſtrong body of men under the command of General Moultrie, a very reſolute officer, to guard the paſſes that led to Charleſtown. All thoſe were deemed ſufficient impediments to prevent the Britiſh forces from forming any projects againſt Carolina during ſo unfavourable a ſeaſon.

But General Prevoſt, on the departure of the American forces for Auguſta, loſt no time in carrying his intended ſcheme into execution. He was invited to the proſecution of it by various motives.

The

The neceſſity of obliging General Lincoln to move from the upper country, where he intercepted the communication between the Royal army and the well affected in the back-ſettlements; the hope of obtaining ſupplies of proviſions, of which he began to ſtand in great need, the expectation of encouraging the loyal party to act in his favour, and the propriety of employing vigorous meaſures, in order to keep up the reputation of the Britiſh arms.

The force he had with him at this time did not much exceed three thouſand men; but they were tried ſoldiers. They ſet forward on this expedition at the end of April, and proceeded with a reſolution that aſtoniſhed the American troops poſted at the different paſſages. Theſe were ſoon diſperſed, and obliged to fall back. As the country became more open, the Britiſh troops made their way with the greater rapidity; and at length diſentangled themſelves from the innumerable ſwamps and marſhes through which they had marched, in ſpite of a continual oppoſition.

As the road to Charleſtown was now cleared, and the Loyaliſts in General Prevoſt's army repreſented the taking of it as a matter of no difficulty, he reſolved, in concurrence with his principal officers, to advance with all ſpeed towards it; hoping from the feeble condition in which it was repreſented to be, that he might poſſibly render himſelf maſter of it before General Lincoln could come to its aſſiſtance.

This officer was perſuaded that the obſtructions to the movements of the Britiſh troops would have been inſurmountable. In this conviction he remained with his whole force at Auguſta. It was with the utmoſt ſurprize he was informed of the progreſs made by General Prevoſt. The danger Charleſtown was in compelled him to haſten with diligence to its relief. To this purpoſe he mount-

ed a ſelect body of infantry on horſeback, and followed it himſelf at the head of all the troops he could collect.

The forces commanded by General Moultrie had occupied all the bridges and avenues on the road to Charleſtown. He was now joined by Pulaſki's legion, and ſome other troops, and ſeemed determined to make a reſolute ſtand. But the vigour with which his people were continually attacked was ſuch, that they retreated every where, and the Britiſh troops arrived at length within fight of Charleſtown, and took poſt almoſt within cannon-ſhot of that city on the twelfth of May.

Moſt of that day was ſpent in ſkirmiſhing: on the next, General Prevoſt having drawn up his troops in ſuch a manner as to make the moſt intimidating appearance, ſent in a ſummons to ſurrender, with offers of a very advantageous capitulation. As the place was not completely fortified, and the regular ſtrength to defend it was inconſiderable, the inhabitants would gladly have compounded with General Prevoſt on terms of neutrality for the city, and the whole province of Carolina, during the remainder of the war. But as theſe conceſſions did not include the ſurrender of Charleſtown, the negociation was dropped, and the town's-people prepared to make an obſtinate defence.

But the circumſtances of General Prevoſt's army did not allow of an aſſault: his artillery was not of a ſufficient weight for ſuch a purpoſe, and he had no ſhipping to ſupport his attack by land. That of the beſieged was numerous and in good condition, and were poſted in ſuch a manner as would have greatly annoyed him in caſe of an attack. Their fortifications were well provided with artillery, and the inhabitants appeared altogether determined and able to make a vigorous reſiſtance.

Beſides

Beſides theſe conſiderations, others equally cogent offered themſelves to diſſuade General Prevoſt from making any further attempt upon the town. General Lincoln was advancing with all ſpeed, at the head of a force ſuperior to his own; were he to fail in his attempt upon the place, he would find himſelf environed with difficulties that would probably prove inſurmountable. The garriſon on the one hand, and General Lincoln on the other, would place him between two fires, and his retreat would become impracticable, from the diminution of his army, that would neceſſarily enſue through the continual ſkirmiſhes wherein he would be engaged, and from the face of the country, interſected with ſuch a multitude of creeks and moraſſes, the fords and paſſes through which would be ſtrongly guarded every where.

He was induced by theſe various motives to withdraw his troops from the poſts they occupied before Charleſtown during the night. He croſſed over to the iſlands of St. James and St. John, lying to the ſouth of Charleſtown. As they abounded in proviſions, they proved the moſt convenient quarters that could have been choſen at this time; his determination being to act on the defenſive, till the arrival of thoſe ſupplies of military ſtores, and other neceſſaries, which he daily expected, and much wanted.

The Britiſh troops tarried in theſe iſlands till the arrival of two frigates, which put it in the power of General Prevoſt to reſume the operations he had projected. The principal one was to poſſeſs himſelf of the iſland of Port Royal, which from its ſituation would afford many advantages. It had an excellent harbour, and commanded the coaſt between Charleſtown and Savannah river, with the town of that name, from whence a communication to the iſland was open and ſecure: here he determined

mined to fix his quarters till he received the reinforcements requiſite to re-enter Carolina.

General Lincoln, who perceived the deſign of the Britiſh commander, thought it neceſſary to make an attempt to diſlodge him from the convenient poſt he had taken, preparatory to the execution of his deſign. To this purpoſe he advanced to Stony Ferry, ſituated between St. John iſland and the main-land. This being a paſs of great importance, General Prevoſt had taken great precautions to ſecure it. A choſen body was poſted here under the command of Colonel Maitland, a very gallant officer, and it was fortified with redoubts and artillery.

The Americans attacked it in great force, but after a long and ſevere diſpute, were obliged to re-
June 20, tire with conſiderable loſs. An armed float,
1779. that had been ſtationed oppoſite to their right flank, galled them ſo effectually, that they were obliged to confine their attack chiefly to the right of the Britiſh lines, which was the ſtrongeſt ſide, and where they met with a fire that did great execution.

After this diſappointment, they deſiſted from any further attempts, and left General Prevoſt at liberty to continue his intended operations. In conſequence of which, he purſued the plan he had formed, and moved his forces towards Port Royal iſland, of which he took poſſeſſion without oppoſition.

During theſe operations in the Southern Colonies, Sir Henry Clinton was concerting at New York the means of diſtreſſing the enemy in the middle Provinces. An expedition was accordingly undertaken againſt Virginia, to be conducted by Sir George Collier with a naval, and General Mathews with a land force. Entering the Cheſapeak, the larger ſhips anchored at the mouth of the river James, to block up its navigation, and Sir George Collier

Collier proceeded with the lighter veſſels up Elizabeth river to Portſmouth. But the wind and tide not ſerving, General Mathews apprehending that the enemy, on receiving intelligence of the Britiſh troops approaching, might the better prepare themſelves for defence, thought it adviſable to land them immediately, and march with all ſpeed to the place intended.

The town of Portſmouth was open and unfortified to the land ſide, but the paſſage up the river was guarded by a fort at half a mile diſtance below it; but the garriſon being weak, and expecting no aſſiſtance, and the fort itſelf unable to ſtand a vigorous attack, it was abandoned without making any defence.

Upon intelligence of the approach of the fleet and army, the enemy ſet fire to ſeveral loaded merchantmen ready for their departure, among which were ſome very large, and of great value. The troops however arrived in time to ſave a conſiderable number.

The damage done to the enemy at Portſmouth and its neighbourhood was immenſe. A prodigious quantity of proviſions prepared for General Waſhington's army, was deſtroyed, together with a vaſt variety of naval and military ſtores, beſides what was carried away. About one hundred and twenty veſſels of different ſizes were burned, and twenty brought off. No loſs was ſuſtained by the fleet and army, which after having fully executed the deſigns propoſed by the expedition, by demoliſhing the fortifications, and ſetting fire to the magazines and ſtore-houſes within their reach, returned to New York in leſs than a month from their departure.

On the return of this detachment and ſquadron, Sir Henry Clinton reſolved to execute a project he had ſometime had in view. Two ſtrong forts were con-

conſtructing by the enemy on the North River, the one at Verplanks Neck on the eaſt; the other at Stoney Point, on the weſtern ſide. They were of the utmoſt importance to the Americans, as they commanded the principal paſs between the Northern and the Southern Colonies, called King's Ferry, and lying midway between them. As they were nearly completed, though not ſufficiently ſtrong to make an effectual reſiſtance, he determined to aſſail them before they were finiſhed.

What further induced him to undertake this expedition, was the diſtance at which General Waſhington lay with his army at this time, and the impracticability of his arriving at the North River ſoon enough to throw any impediments in the way of this deſign.

On the thirtieth of May, the force deſtined for this expedition embarked under General Vaughan; Sir George Collier commanded the ſhipping. A diviſion of the troops landed within eight miles of Verplanks, which the enemy abandoned, after ſetting fire to the barracks, a block houſe, and all that was combuſtible, and not in readineſs to carry off.

Another diviſion landed on the weſtern ſide of the river, at three miles diſtance from Stoney Point, from which the enemy immediately withdrew on its appearance.

On the oppoſite ſhore, facing Stoney Point, ſtood a ſmall but ſtrong fortification; which had been conſtructed to ſecure the paſſage of the river on either ſide. It was called Fayette, in honour of the French nobleman of that name in the American ſervice. Its ſituation was hardly acceſſible, for which reaſon it was determined to attack it from the other ſhore. To this intent ſome heavy pieces of artillery were dragged up to Stoney Point from the foot of the rocks where it was ſituated, and a battery of cannon and

and mortars erected on their ſummit, which overlooked and commanded fort Fayette.

While General Pattiſon, who commanded the diviſion that had maſtered Stoney Point, was employed in cannonading fort Fayette, General Vaughan proceeded from Verplanks through a range of hills, and ſurrounded the fort on the land ſide. Sir George Collier had alſo ſtationed his ſhipping in ſuch a manner, as to cut off the garriſon's retreat by water, and to ſubject it in the mean time to a very heavy fire.

Thus aſſailed on all ſides, the garriſon, after making a moſt reſolute defence, was obliged to ſurrender without any other condition, than that of being promiſed civil uſage, to which their gallant behaviour certainly intitled them.

The importance of both theſe acquiſitions was ſuch, that immediate diligence was uſed to put them into the completeſt ſtate of defence. Stoney Point, as lying neareſt the enemy, was principally attended to; no doubt being entertained that their efforts would quickly be directed to its recovery.

While the works were carrying on at theſe places, Sir Henry Clinton, in order to cover them, encamped at Philipſburg, about half way between them and New York iſland. Here he commanded the country adjacent to the North River on both ſhores, and was in readineſs to ſeize any favourable opportunity of compelling General Waſhington to an engagement, in caſe he ſhould leave his ſtation in Jerſey, and approach nearer to the Britiſh army.

The poſt occupied by Sir Henry Clinton, and the poſſeſſion of Verplanks and Stoney Point, proved very incommoding to the Americans, by intercepting the direct communication between the northern and ſouthern Colonies acroſs the river Hudſon, and obliging them to make a circuit of near one hundred miles, for the purpoſes of neceſſary correſpondence

through one of the moſt mountainous and difficult countries in America.

The circumſtances of the American army, were not ſuch at this period as to enable General Waſhington to undertake any offenſive operations. The late ſucceſsful expeditions of the Britiſh forces into ſeveral parts of the continent, had conſiderably weakened it, by the detachments he had been forced to make in order to put thoſe places in a poſture of defence, which lay chiefly expoſed to their incurſions. The deſtruction of ſtores and proviſions by theſe expeditions, had not a little diſconcerted the meaſures projected by the Americans, and reduced them to the neceſſity of acting chiefly upon the defenſive.

Another motive no leſs prevalent conduced in preventing the American General from encountering any unneceſſary riſk at the preſent. A powerful aſſiſtance of troops had been promiſed, and was now expected from France. In conſequence of this expectation, Congreſs was not willing he ſhould put it in the power of the Britiſh army to bring him to action, leſt a defeat ſhould enſue, which would diminiſh their importance and reputation, and deprive them of the ability of co-operating with, and rendering effectual the ſtrength that might be ſent for their ſupport.

In the mean time they loſt no opportunity of diſtreſſing the fleet and army, by cutting off the trade to New York, by means of the numerous privateers that ſwarmed along the coaſt, and infeſted eſpecially the navigation of the Sound between Long Iſland and Connecticut.

In order to put a ſtop to theſe depredations, it was determined by the Britiſh commanders to make a vigorous effort on the coaſt of Connecticut, and to deſtroy thoſe places that proved a receptacle to theſe

theſe predatory veſſels, and from whence they were fitted out.

To this intent a ſelect body of men was put under the command of Governor Tryon, and General Garth, an officer of known experience and activity. They embarked under the convoy of a good number of armed veſſels, and proceeded to Newhaven, where they landed. On intelligence of their approach, the militia of the country aſſembled, and marched to the aſſiſtance of the inhabitants. But their oppoſition was ineffectual: the batteries that protected the harbour were demoliſhed, together with the fort, and all the ſhipping and naval ſtores of every kind that were found. The town itſelf received no moleſtation: this was owing to the inhabitants having abſtained from firing upon the troops out of the houſes.

From Newhaven the armament ſailed to Fairfield, which made a moſt reſolute and deſperate defence. Here the conteſt was ſo violent, that the town was unhappily ſet on fire, and totally conſumed with all it contained.

The next town they attacked was Norwalk, where they met with no leſs determined an oppoſition, both from the town's people, and large bodies of militia that came to their aſſiſtance from all parts of the neighbourhood. This place ſhared the ſame fate as Fairfield, and was totally reduced to aſhes, as was alſo Greenfield, a ſmall ſea port; by the burning of which this deſtructive expedition terminated.

Immenſe damage was done to the Americans upon this occaſion. Excluſive of the deſtruction of their houſes, they ſuſtained a prodigious loſs in ſhipping, merchandiſe, and effects of all denominations.

This military execution took place with a very inconſiderable detriment to the troops that effected it. Notwithſtanding the various impediments they

had to overcome, and the perpetual encounters with men who oppoſed them with the utmoſt reſolution, the number of killed was not more than twenty, and of wounded about one hundred and thirty.

General Waſhington, on the taking of Verplanks Neck, and Stoney Point, and the deſtructive incurſions into Connecticut, removed from his encampment in Jerſey, and advanced nearer to Sir Henry Clinton, in order to oblige him to call in his detachments, and contract his operations; but he took at the ſame time ſo ſtrong a poſition in the mountainous country along the ſhores of Hudſon's river, that the Britiſh General found it impracticable to bring him to an engagement.

One of the motives for General Waſhington's approach, was, a deſign he had formed to recover Stoney Point by ſurprize. It had been put into as complete a poſture of defence, as the ſhortneſs of the time ſince it fell into the hands of Sir Henry Clinton, would permit: the garriſon conſiſted of a ſelect party under Colonel Johnſon.

The American General choſe for the execution of his deſign, one of the moſt reſolute officers in his army. This was General Wayne, who, at the head of a ſtrong detachment of picked men, proceeded through a road full of impediments, and arrived towards the cloſe of the evening of the fifteenth of July, within ſight of Stoney Point. Here they formed in two columns, and to prevent a diſcovery, waited till midnight.

The column on the right was commanded by General Wayne; his van-guard was compoſed of one hundred and fifty of his braveſt ſoldiers, led on by Colonel Fleury, a French officer of noted bravery. The left column was under the command of Major Steward, a bold and active man, and had a van-guard of choſen troops like the right, The orders were to make uſe of the bayonet only; for which purpoſe no muſkets were ſuffered to be loaded.

The

The two columns marched to the attack from the oppoſite ſides of the works. Another body made a feint on that ſide which lay between them. Never did the American troops behave with more intrepidity than upon this occaſion. The works were ſurrounded with a moraſs and two rows of abbatis, and well provided with artillery. They were oppoſed by a heavy fire of muſketry and grape ſhot. They forced their way through theſe various obſtacles, bayonet in hand, and both columns met in the center of the works, where the garriſon was obliged to ſurrender priſoners of war.

The conduct and perſonal behaviour of General Wayne gained him great honour. He received a dangerous wound during the attack; but he ſtill perſiſted in conducting it with great courage and preſence of mind. His officers followed his example, and acquitted themſelves in a manner that acquired great reputation to the American troops.

Their ſucceſs in this enterprize was conſidered by Congreſs in a light of ſuch importance, that it was thought neceſſary to perpetuate the memory of it in a particular manner, by conferring honorary rewards upon thoſe who had moſt ſignalized themſelves. General Wayne received a gold medal, emblematic of this action; two of ſilver were beſtowed upon Colonel Fleury, who ſtruck the Britiſh colours with his own hand, and Major Steward, who headed the left column with remarkable intrepidity and conduct. A proportionable recompence was given to all the officers and ſoldiers employed upon this occaſion.

The loſs of the Britiſh troops, notwithſtanding a brave defence, was inconſiderable in number of ſlain; but that of priſoners amounted to five hundred.

As ſoon as the Americans were maſters of Stoney Point, they turned the artillery which they found

on the fortifications, againſt the works at Verplanks Neck, which lay within gun ſhot on the other ſide of the river; a body of troops advanced at the ſame time on the land ſide, in order to cut off the retreat of the garriſon.

On receiving intelligence of the ſurprize at Stoney Point, Sir Henry Clinton immediately moved his army forwards to retake it, and to compel the enemy to abandon the attack of Verplanks: Sir George Collier proceeded up the river with armed veſſels and tranſports, with troops on board to the ſame intent.

The Britiſh General made ſeveral movements tending to draw General Waſhington to an engagement; but they were ineffectual: as he did not deem the preſervation of Stoney Point of ſufficient conſequence to venture an attack, he cautiouſly avoided one, and contented himſelf with demoliſhing as much of the fortifications as time would permit, and with carrying off the artillery. The Britiſh troops retook poſſeſſion of it three days after it was ſurprized.

The ſucceſs of the Americans at Stoney Point, induced them to make another attempt of the ſame kind at Paulus Hook, a fortified poſt on the Jerſey ſide, oppoſite to the city of New York. They preſented themſelves at three o'clock in the morning, before the gate of the fortifications; and being miſtaken by the guard for a party of Britiſh troops, returning from an excurſion on which they had been detached on the preceding day, they entered without oppoſition, and made themſelves maſters of a block-houſe, and two redoubts; but the alarm being ſpread, Major Sutherland, the commandant, threw himſelf, with a body of Heſſians, into another redoubt, by an inceſſant fire from which he forced the enemy to quit the poſts they had ſeized. They withdrew with ſo much precipitation,

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tation, that they had not time to ſet fire to the barracks, or to ſpike the guns.

During theſe tranſactions in the Province of New York, the people of Maſſachuſet had been at great pains and expence, in equipping an armament for an expedition againſt a Britiſh poſt and ſettlement began during the ſummer, and already in a ſtate of forwardneſs, on the eaſtern limits of their territories.

This new poſt was on the river Penobſcot, on the borders of Nova Scotia. A body of the Britiſh troops had lately taken poſſeſſion of an advantageous ſituation on that river, and begun the conſtruction of a fort, which, when finiſhed, it was foreſeen by the enemy, would prove a great annoyance to them in thoſe parts, where the ſettlements they had formed of late years were but weak, and quite unable to defend themſelves againſt an enemy in any conſiderable force.

It was determined, therefore, to loſe no time in diſlodging the Britiſh troops ſtationed there, before they could complete their intent. To this purpoſe a numerous armament, and a good body of troops were prepared at Boſton, the command of which was given to Commodore Saltonſtall, and General Lovel.

Colonel Maclane, who commanded the poſt at Penobſcot, on being apprized of the preparations that were making at Boſton, found it neceſſary to drop the proſecution of his firſt project, which was the erection of a regular fort, and to confine himſelf to the putting of the works already conſtructed in the beſt poſture of defence, which the ſhortneſs of the notice given him would admit. His force did not reach to one thouſand men, and there were only three armed veſſels with him; but he made ſuch good uſe of it, that in a few days the poſt he occupied was placed in a reſpectable ſtate of defence.

On the twenty-fifth of July, the armament from Boſton came in ſight. It conſiſted of thirty-ſeven armed veſſels and tranſports. It began by a heavy cannonade upon the Britiſh ſhipping; which they vigorouſly returned, aided by a battery of four twelve-pounders, ſituated on the banks of the river for their protection.

The fortifications which had been conſtructed with an intent to complete them into a fort, ſtood in the middle of a ſmall peninſula; the weſtern part of it which projected into the river, forming a bay, within which the veſſels lay. On the narroweſt part of the peninſula, between the fortifications and the land, an entrenchment had been thrown up, which perfectly ſecured the poſt from that quarter.

The enemy being repulſed in their firſt attack, withdrew to the weſtern end of the peninſula; from whence they returned the next day, and made a ſecond attack; but with no better ſucceſs than their former; upon which they deſiſted from any more on that ſide.

Their next attempt was to land on the weſtern point; but here too they were ſucceſſively foiled; till having found means to bring the fire of their largeſt veſſels to bear upon the ſhore, they effected a landing under their guns, after a long and reſolute defence by the troops poſted to oppoſe them.

After making good their landing, they erected two batteries; from which they kept up a ſtrong and inceſſant fire upon the works. But this did not prevent the garriſon from carrying them on with unremitting induſtry. The cannonade continued with equal ſpirit on both ſides during a fortnight; at the expiration of which, it was reſolved by the American commanders to make a general aſſault.

While they were employed in preparations for this purpoſe, and the garriſon was making ready to receive them, an unexpected event put an end to their

their deſign. On the fourteenth of Auguſt, it was diſcovered early in the morning, that the beſiegers had left their camp and reimbarked their artillery during the preceding night. Nor were the garriſon long in ſuſpenſe to what cauſe they ſhould attribute this ſudden retreat. A Britiſh fleet was ſhortly deſcried coming up the river.

It was commanded by Sir George Collier, who had ſailed from New York to the relief of the Britiſh forces ſtationed here, the moment intelligence had been received of their danger. It conſiſted of one man of war of the line, and five frigates. The Maſſachuſet fleet ſeemed at firſt to intend a ſtout reſiſtance; and drew up acroſs the river in the form of a creſcent; but on the approach of the Britiſh ſhips, they withdrew with the utmoſt precipitation.

They were purſued with ſuch eagerneſs, that not one ſingle veſſel of the whole fleet that had ſailed from Boſton could effect an eſcape. They were chiefly blown up and deſtroyed by the Americans themſelves.

This was a heavy blow to the Province of Maſſachuſet. The fleet conſiſted of nineteen armed veſſels, in excellent condition, one of which carried thirty-two guns, five others twenty-four, and the remainder from eighteen to fourteen. The tranſports amounted to four and twenty.

The ſoldiers and ſailors who eſcaped on ſhore from this univerſal deſtruction of their naval force, were obliged to explore their way through woods and wilderneſſes, where they experienced great diſtreſs for want of proviſions. To complete their calamity, a dreadful quarrel broke out between the troops and ſeamen, concerning the cauſes of their diſaſter at Penobſcot. It was carried to ſuch a length, that a violent fray enſued among them, wherein numbers were ſlain.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLV.

Military Tranſactions in the Weſt Indies.

1779.

THE capture of the iſland of St. Lucia, and the defeat of the French by ſea and land there, conferred great reputation on the Britiſh arms. Admiral Byron arriving ſhortly after with his ſquadron, gave them a ſuperiority, which cauſed no little alarm among the French iſlands.

The junction of this officer with Admiral Barrington, enabled both to ſail immediately to Martinico, in order to provoke Count D'Eſtaing to come forth and engage them. He had lately been reinforced, and was little, if at all inferior to them; but he expected further reinforcements; and had not forgotten his reception at St. Lucia from a much ſmaller force than his own.

The conqueſt of St. Lucia, however it was honourable, and in ſome reſpects uſeful, proved however a moſt deſtructive acquiſition to the Britiſh troops. Accuſtomed to the more temperate climate of North America, they were not able to bear the relaxing unhealthy change of the Weſt Indies. Sickneſs and mortality ſoon ſpread among them, and ſwept off multitudes. This was truly an irreparable loſs, as it was impoſſible to ſupply the places of ſuch troops as had been ſent from America.

Reinforcements being arrived from France to the French fleet under Count De Graſſe, it was now imagined that Count D'Eſtaing would have quitted Port Royal, and ventured a general engagement; but he continued immoveably in that harbour. Admiral Rowley had joined the Britiſh fleet from Europe;

rope; but there was no ſufficient diſparity between it and the French fleet, to account for a man of Count D'Eſtaing's well known ſpirit, declining an engagement when ſo frequently offered him by the Britiſh Admirals.

His conduct, however, was influenced by very proper motives. He waited an opportunity which he knew muſt ſoon arrive, of attacking the Britiſh fleet at a diſadvantage, by the diminution of its ſtrength, through the convoys neceſſary for the homeward-bound trade from the Britiſh Weſt India iſlands. It was now the middle of June, the uſual ſeaſon of its departure for Europe, and it was aſſembled at St. Chriſtopher's in readineſs to ſail.

The ſituation of Admiral Byron, the commander in chief, was extremely difficult and critical. The immenſe value of the merchantmen now on their departure, rendered it abſolutely indiſpenſible to give them a powerful convoy. A ſmall one would have ſubjected it, as well as them, to the utmoſt danger, by falling in with M. De la Motte Piquet, who was at this time, with a ſtrong ſquadron, on his way from France to the French iſlands. But were it to eſcape from this peril, ſtill it would run the greateſt riſk, on its return to join the remainder of the Britiſh fleet, to be intercepted by the whole French fleet under Count D'Eſtaing. He would not certainly omit ſo fair an opportunity of attacking one of the divided parts of the fleet; either that which had convoyed the trade, or that which remained at St. Lucia; and his ſuperiority was ſo great at preſent, that to divide the Britiſh fleet, would be a meaſure which no reaſon could juſtify.

In conſequence of theſe conſiderations, it was determined to convoy the homeward trade with the whole fleet, till it was out of danger of being followed by Count D'Eſtaing, or of falling in with M. De la Motte.

No

No ſooner was this determination carried into execution, than Count D'Eſtaing, as it had been highly apprehended, reſolved immediately to avail himſelf of it. He diſpatched a body of troops to attack the iſland of St. Vincent. They were joined, on their landing, by a great multitude of the Caribbe Indians who were ſettled in the iſland, and who gladly embraced this opportunity of revenging themſelves for the injuries they had received ſome years before, and the diſpoſſeſſion of their lands, that took place ſome time after the concluſion of the laſt war.

The combined ſtrengh of theſe foreign and domeſtic enemies, was too great to be withſtood by an inconſiderable garriſon, eſpecially, as by means of the Caribbees, the enemy had been put in poſſeſſion of the heights overlooking and commanding the town of Kingſton, the principal place in the iſland, and a large body of regular troops was expected from Martinico.

June 18, 1779. Theſe motives induced the Governor to capitulate. The conditions were very favourable. It was apparently the intention of the French, to diminiſh the inclination to make an obſtinate reſiſtance againſt them, by granting the moſt advantageous terms to thoſe who ſurrendered.

In the mean time, Count D'Eſtaing was reinforced by the arrival of the ſquadron commanded by Monſ. De la Motte. His fleet now conſiſted of twenty-ſix ſhips of the line, and twelve frigates; and his land force of ten thouſand men.

With this powerful armament, he ſet ſail for the iſland of Grenada; the ſtrength of which conſiſted of about one hundred and fifty regulars, and three or four hundred armed inhabitants. He arrived there on the ſecond of July, and landed about three thouſand men, chiefly Iriſh, being part of the Brigade compoſed of natives of Ireland in the ſervice of France.

They

They were conducted by Count Dillon, who diſpoſed his troops in ſuch a manner, as to ſurround the hill that overlooks St. George's town, and commands it, together with the fort and harbour.

Lord Macartney, the Governor, though he could not avoid foreſeeing that all reſiſtance would be vain againſt ſo formidable a force, reſolved however to make an honourable and gallant defence. The preparations made, and the countenance ſhewn by the garriſon upon this occaſion, were ſuch as induced Count D'Eſtaing to be perſonally preſent at the attack. He headed a column, and behaved with great bravery; but his troops were repulſed on the firſt attempt againſt the intrenchments on the hill: their ſecond onſet was more ſucceſsful: it laſted near two hours. The garriſon, after a moſt courageous oppoſition, were obliged to yield to the prodigious ſuperiority of number that aſſailed them on every ſide. The loſs of the French in this conflict, was no leſs than three hundred killed and wounded.

After making themſelves maſters of the intrenchments on the hill, they turned the artillery taken there, againſt the fort that lay under it. This obliged the Governor to demand a capitulation. Count D'Eſtaing acted upon this occaſion in a very haughty and inſulting manner. He rejected peremptorily all the articles laid before him, and ſent back others, with which he inſiſted on their inſtant compliance.

But the conditions he offered were of ſo extraordinary and unprecedented a nature, that both the Governor and inhabitants agreed in rejecting them without heſitation. The French commander being determined to grant no other, it was judged adviſable to ſurrender without making any conditions at all.

The conduct of Count D'Eſtaing, after his becoming maſter of this iſland, did no credit to his character. It was ſevere and oppreſſive, and quite repugnant

repugnant to that generoſity which had been experienced by the other iſlands that had ſurrendered to the arms of France. The French ſoldiers were indulged, it has been ſaid, in the moſt unwarrantable irregularities, and had they not been reſtrained by the Iriſh troops in the French ſervice, would have proceeded to ſtill greater.

Admiral Byron, after accompanying the homeward-bound Weſt India fleet till out of danger, and appointing them a convoy to ſee them ſafe home, returned with the remainder of his ſquadron to St. Lucia. On being apprized of the reduction of St. Vincent by the French, he ſailed immediately with a body of troops under General Grant for its recovery.

They had not proceeded far, when they were informed that Count D'Eſtaing had landed a large force at Grenada; but that Lord Macartney was making an obſtinate defence, and would be able to maintain his ground till ſuccours arrived. On this intelligence they directly ſteered for Grenada.

On the ſixth of July, the Britiſh fleet came in ſight of that of France, then lying at anchor off the harbour of St. George. The force under Admiral Byron conſiſted of twenty one ſhips of the line, and only one frigate; that under Count D'Eſtaing, of twenty-ſeven ſail of the line, and ſeven frigates.

Upon ſight of the Britiſh fleet, the French immediately got under way. It was the intention and endeavour of the Britiſh Admiral to come to cloſe action, from a conſciouſneſs of the ſuperiority of the Engliſh in that mode of fighting. The intent of the French Admiral, on the other hand, was to avoid an engagement of that deciſive nature, and to confine himſelf to the preſervation of his conqueſt.

In conſequence of this plan, the French fleet, which, as more lately come out of port, was in

better condition, and ſailed the faſteſt, kept in ſo diſtant a poſition, that it was with difficulty it could be reached by any part of the Britiſh fleet, nor without expoſing this part to the neceſſity of ſuſtaining, unſupported, a combat againſt their whole force.

Admiral Byron, on perceiving the diſpoſition, and conjecturing the deſign of the enemy, made the ſignal for chacing, and coming to a cloſe engagement, notwitſtanding their evident ſuperiority. The engagement begun about eight in the morning; when Admiral Barrington with his own, and two other ſhips, commanded by Captains Sawyer and Gardner, fetched the van of the enemy, which they attacked with the greateſt ſpirit; but the other ſhips of his diviſion not being able for a long time to come up to his ſupport, theſe three ſhips ſuffered conſiderably from the vaſt ſuperiority with which they were neceſſitated to encounter, and the Admiral himſelf was wounded.

The Britiſh fleet endeavoured in vain to compel the enemy to come to a cloſe fight; they avoided it with the utmoſt circumſpection and dexterity. It was only by ſeizing the tranſient opportunities of the different movements occaſioned by the wind and weather, that ſome of the Britiſh ſhips cloſed in with the enemy; but then it was upon ſuch diſadvantageous terms, as nothing but the extreme eagerneſs of the Britiſh commanders, would have induced them to ſubmit to, as they were conſtantly engaged with a ſuperiority out of all proportion.

The officers whoſe fortune it was to encounter the enemy in this unequal manner, were Captains Collingwood, Edwards, and Cornwallis.—They ſtood the fire of the whole French fleet during part of the engagement. Captain Fanſhaw of the Monmouth, a ſixty-four gun ſhip, ſingly threw himſelf in the way of the enemy's van, to ſtop them.

them. Admiral Rowley, and Captain Butchart, fought them at the ſame diſadvantage, and every Captain in the fleet ſtrove with no leſs ſpirit to have an equal ſhare in the action.

The diſtance at which the French fleet continued, and the difficulty of nearing it ſufficiently to bring it to cloſe action, occaſioned a general ceſſation of firing about noon. It recommenced about two in the afternoon, and laſted, with different interruptions, till the evening. But the Britiſh Admiral, notwithſtanding his repeated efforts, could not accompliſh the end he ſo ardently ſought, of forcing the enemy to a cloſe fight.

During the action, ſome of the ſhips of Admiral Byron's fleet had boldly made their way to the very mouth of St. George's harbour. Not knowing the iſland was in the poſſeſſion of the French, their intent was to let the garriſon ſee they were coming to their relief, and thereby to encourage them to hold out. But they were quickly undeceived, when they perceived the French colours flying aſhore, and the guns of the forts and batteries firing at them.

This diſcovery put an end to the deſign that had brought on this engagement, which was to compel the French to abandon the attack of the iſland.—The inferiority of the Britiſh naval and military force, rendered the recovery of it no leſs impracticable; and it was now become highly neceſſary to conſult the ſafety of the tranſports with the troops on board, which lay greatly expoſed, from the number of large frigates, which it was apprehended the French would not fail to diſpatch in purſuit of them.

Notwithſtanding the damage ſeveral of the Britiſh ſhips had ſuſtained in their ſails and rigging, and their conſequent inability of acting to advantage, the French did not think proper to renew the action. One ſhip, in particular, the Lion of ſixty-

four guns, Captain Cornwallis, had ſuffered ſo conſiderably, that ſhe was utterly incapable of rejoining the fleet, that was now plying to windward, and was obliged to bear away alone before the wind.—She arrived in a few days at Jamaica, without being followed by any of the enemy, notwithſtanding her weak condition.

Two other ſhips lay far aſtern, much diſabled; but the French did not attempt to cut them off, from the apprehenſion of bringing on a cloſe and general action. The ſame motive prevented them from attempting to capture the tranſports. The whole of their conduct evinced they did not dare to riſk any meaſure that would involve them in a deciſive action.

Admiral Byron having directed the Monmouth to make the beſt of her way to St. Chriſtopher, or Antigua, together with the tranſports, drew up his remaining ſhips in a line of battle, expecting, that being no more than three miles diſtant from the enemy, they would avail themſelves of their great ſuperiority, and not permit him to withdraw the tranſports without endeavouring to ſeize them; but after having waited in this poſition during the whole night, he was much ſurprized in the morning to find the whole French fleet had returned to its ſtation at Grenada.

Never did the valour of the Britiſh naval officers diſplay itſelf more conſpicuouſly than upon this occaſion. The moſt ſpirited efforts were viſible throughout the whole fleet to ſecond the intention of their commander. So reſolute and eager, indeed, were they to encounter the enemy in any ſituation, however ſo diſadvantageous and forlorn, that Captain Cornwallis, in the Lion, almoſt a wreck, falling in with the Monmouth, which he miſtook for an enemy, he made ready to attack her with the utmoſt alacrity and reſolution.

The conſequences of the engagement between the Britiſh and French fleets off Grenada, were equally deſtructive to both of them, though in a different line. The Britiſh ſhips were greatly damaged, on the one hand, though their loſs of men was inconſiderable for ſo long and obſtinate an action, not amounting to above one hundred and eighty killed, and three hundred and fifty wounded. On the other hand, the French ſuffered much leſs in their ſhipping, but their liſt of ſlain and wounded amounted, according to impartial accounts, to more than three thouſand.

But as the loſs on the French ſide was merely of men, it was not ſo much felt, from the multitudes with which their ſhips are always crouded. The detriment incurred by the Engliſh was much more eſſential, from the time that would be conſumed, and the difficulty in repairing their damages in that part of the world.

Admiral Byron found it neceſſary to repair to St. Chriſtopher's, in order to refit his ſhips as well as that ſtation would enable him. He was followed thither ſome time after by Count D'Eſtaing, who had now received freſh reinforcements, and whoſe ſuperiority was ſo great and decifive, that it would have been the higheſt temerity to have attacked him in the diſabled condition wherein the Britiſh fleet was at preſent.

It was much apprehended that Count D'Eſtaing would have ſeized this opportunity of Admiral Byron's inability to oppoſe him, to have attacked ſome of the Britiſh iſlands; but as they were in a much better ſtate of defence than thoſe that had fallen into the hands of the French, and as the Britiſh fleet would ſoon be able to reſume its operations, he did not judge it adviſable to make any further enterprizes, till ſome occaſion ſhould occur that might oblige it to move to a greater diſtance.

Another

Another motive prevented him from any ſuch attempt at this time, which was the neceſſity of convoying the home-bound fleet of French merchantmen from their Weſt India iſlands.

On his return from the performance of this duty, his orders from the Court of France were to leave the Weſt Indies, and to proceed with all expedition to North America, where he was to co-operate with the whole ſtrength of which he was poſſeſſed, in the execution of thoſe deſigns which ſhould be found requiſite to carry into execution for the ſervice of the Americans.

Hitherto, the alliance with France had been productive of much leſs utility to America than had been expected either by the Colonies or the French themſelves. The great armament that had been ſent with Count D'Eſtaing, had done nothing correſponding with the mighty hopes that had been formed from the daring ſpirit of its commander. His conduct in quitting the coaſt of America, at a time when his aſſiſtance was evidently wanted, or could at leaſt have proved highly conſequential, had greatly leſſened the good opinion of him, and the confidence with which he had been ſo warmly received by the Coloniſts.

His departure had been the cauſe of much miſchief to the American intereſt. Excluſive of other injuries of leſſer note, the loſs of Georgia had taken place, and Carolina was in imminent danger of ſharing the like fate. The Britiſh ſhipping infeſted every part of the coaſt, and from its ſuperiority, opened an eaſy entrance every where into the various provinces of the confederacy. Their maritime ſituation, and their perpetual interſection by large rivers, navigable for ſhips of force, expoſed them to continual incurſions and depredations, by which the country experienced the moſt heavy diſtreſſes, and which, if not effectually checked by a naval

force able to repel that of the enemy, would in proceſs of time compaſs its total ruin.

Such were the complaints of the Americans on the ſailing of Count D'Eſtaing's ſquadron for the Weſt Indies. The ſubſequent diſaſters that had befallen them, increaſed their diſcontents at being abandoned, as they rightly enough expreſſed it, by Count D'Eſtaing, at the very moment they had enabled him to act with vigour for the cauſe of France and of America, where his operations would have been moſt deciſive, and were indiſpenſibly wanted.

Theſe complaints ſoon reached the Court of France, and made the greater impreſſion, as they were well founded. In order to obviate any further diſſatisfaction in a people whom it was ſo highly the intereſt of France to treat with particular condeſcendence and attention, eſpecially when their demands were reaſonable, the French miniſtry ſent inſtructions to Count D'Eſtaing, whereby he was enjoined to return with all ſpeed to the aſſiſtance of the Colonies.

In purſuance of this injunction, he ſet ſail for the Continent at the head of twenty-two ſhips of the line, and ten large frigates. His intentions and his hopes were, as before, directed to objects of the firſt magnitude. The firſt meaſure of the plan in contemplation was to expel the Britiſh forces out of Georgia, and to place that province, and the contiguous one of South Carolina, and, in ſhort, all the Southern Colonies, on a footing of perfect ſecurity from any future invaſions by the Britiſh troops.

After the accompliſhment of this object, which he promiſed himſelf would be attended with no great difficulty, from the ſmallneſs of the force that was to oppoſe him, the next he propoſed was no leſs than a total deliverance of America from the terror of the Britiſh arms. This was to be effected

fected by the deſtruction of the Britiſh fleet and army at New York.

This latter part of the plan he doubted not to accompliſh through the co-operation of the American army under General Waſhington. The land force he had with him was conſiderable, and he looked upon his naval ſtrength as irreſiſtible, in the preſent weak condition of the Britiſh marine at New York.

His arrival on the coaſt of Georgia being wholly unexpected, ſome veſſels on their way thither from that city with ſtores and proviſions, fell into his hands. The Experiment, of fifty guns, commanded by Sir James Wallace, had alſo the misfortune of falling in with his fleet: though previouſly diſabled by a violent ſtorm, ſhe defended herſelf with the utmoſt reſolution, and was not taken without much difficulty.

As no intelligence had been received of the approach of Count D'Eſtaing, no preparations had been made for a ſuitable reſiſtance. The Britiſh troops were ſtill divided in ſeparate cantonments. The head quarters were at Savannah town; but the force with General Prevoſt at that place was very inconſiderable, the major part being ſtationed on the iſland of Port Royal, with Colonel Maitland.

An expreſs was immediately diſpatched to the Colonel, on the arrival of the French fleet, with orders to join him with all ſpeed, with the whole body under his command; but the expreſs was intercepted by one of the many American parties that were on the look-out to prevent a communication between theſe two bodies of Britiſh troops. The conſequence was, that for want of timely advice, the Colonel was not ready to ſet out till the French fleet had occupied the paſſage by ſea, and the Americans had ſtrongly ſecured moſt of the paſſes by land.

In this dangerous and difficult ſituation, Colonel Maitland diſplayed a ſpirit and activity that did him and his people the higheſt honour. The only means remaining to join the diviſion at Savannah, was by the creeks and inlets ſcattered along the ſhore, and theſe were narrowly watched and guarded by the enemy. In the face of theſe numerous obſtacles, he reſolutely ſet forward with a determination to run all hazards ſooner than not effect a junction, without which he knew all oppoſition would be vain againſt ſuch a force as that which would be employed by the French and Americans upon this occaſion.

In the mean time, Count D'Eſtaing was concerting with the governing powers in Carolina, the meaſures that were to be adopted in the preſent circumſtances. It was intended to collect a large force to co-operate with him, which with that already under General Lincoln, would be fully adequate to the deſign of not only reducing Georgia, but of capturing at the ſame time all the Britiſh troops in that province.

After having made all the neceſſary arrangements, the whole French fleet came to an anchor Sept. 9. at the mouth of Savannah river. The fri- 1779. gates were ſtationed at the entrance of the various inlets and rivers, and the troops were landed as near as it was practicable to the town of Savannah.

As ſoon as Count D'Eſtaing had brought his troops aſhore, he moved them up to the Britiſh lines, intending to harraſs the corps under General Prevoſt by continual ſkirmiſhes and alarms, and to depreſs it by inceſſant fatigue, before it could be reinforced with the detachment that was yet on its way from the iſland of Port Royal, and had many difficulties to ſtruggle with before it could effect a junction with the forces at Savannah.

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To this intent a ſelect party of French were drawn out, and advanced to the Britiſh lines, aſſiſted by a body of cavalry under the command of the Poliſh Count Polaſki; but General Prevoſt was too prudent to venture his men out of their lines, and the French, after giving and receiving ſeveral vollies of ſmall arms, withdrew to their encampment.

On the ſixteenth of September, Count D'Eſtaing ſummoned General Prevoſt to ſurrender to the arms of France. The meſſage was conceived in terms of the higheſt confidence and certainty of ſucceſs. It boaſted of the manner in which Grenada had been taken, and warned the Britiſh General to beware of making a fruitleſs reſiſtance; which he intimated would probably be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences to the beſieged.

In conſequence of a refuſal to liſten to a ſummons that offered no ſpecific terms, Count D'Eſtaing granted a ſuſpenſion of arms, for twenty-four hours deliberation. He doubted not, from the evident ſuperiority of his force, and the little apparent probability of their being able to reſiſt it, that the garriſon would, upon mature deliberation, agree to a capitulation.

But their reſolution was already taken, which was, to hold out to the laſt extremity. They availed themſelves, in the mean while, of the ſuſpenſion of arms, to make every preparation requiſite for the obſtinate defence they intended. Before the expiration of the time, their exertions were ſuch, that a number of cannon were mounted in addition to thoſe already on the works, and theſe were ſtrengthened anew.

In the courſe of this day, the long expected and deſired reinforcement arrived under Colonel Maitland, after having ſurmounted a variery of obſtructions, and made his way through almoſt impaſſable ſwamps and moraſſes.

On the ſeventeenth, a final anſwer was returned to Count D'Eſtaing's ſummons, by which he was given to underſtand, that an unanimous determination was taken to defend the place to the laſt man. Count D'Eſtaing received it with equal diſpleaſure and aſtoniſhment. Relying on a ſpeedy ſurrender, it grieved him that the termination of this buſineſs was delayed in a manner he ſo little ſuſpected, and which prevented him from entering upon the more important operations he had in view.

A junction being formed by the French and American forces, they amounted together to between nine and ten thouſand men. Count D'Eſtaing had five thouſand regulars, and near one thouſand ſtout Mulattos and free-negroes, well armed. The body of Americans that joined him under the command of General Lincoln, conſiſted of about two thouſand at firſt; but were ſoon augmented to twice that number.

To oppoſe this formidable ſtrength, General Prevoſt had no more, altogether, than three thouſand men: but they were ſuch as continual experience had ſhewn he could place the firmeſt dependence on. Numbers of them were refugees, whom reſentment for the uſage they had received, exaſperated to a degree that rendered them deſperate.

The French and Americans encamped ſeparately. Count D'Eſtaing thought it moſt prudent to keep them apart. His motives for this meaſure were well founded. He knew by experience, how apt they were to diſagree; and he hoped that by acting aſunder from each other, a reciprocal emulation would be excited.

It was agreed accordingly, that each of them ſhould carry on their reſpective approaches without interference form either ſide. This method was particularly agreeable to the French; who looking upon themſelves as incomparably ſuperior to the Americans,

caps, did not chuſe to divide any honour with theſe, to which they imagined that they alone were entitled.

From the very commencement of his operations againſt the Britiſh garriſon, Count D'Eſtaing ſoon perceived he would have a different reſiſtance to encounter with, than that he had met at Grenada; from which, however, he ought to have learned, conſidering the handful of undiſciplined planters that oppoſed him with ſo much bravery, not to have ſo haſtily preſumed on the reduction of a place defended by Britiſh regulars.

Both the French and the Americans behaved with great ſpirit and activity, in their endeavours to interrupt the works that were continually carried on by the garriſon. But they could not prevent them. Such was the unremitting perſeverance of the Britiſh military and ſeamen, in ſpite of all obſtructions, and ſuch their indefatigable induſtry, that every day added to the ſtrength of their fortifications and batteries: theſe in particular increaſed to ſuch a degree, that before the concluſion of the ſiege near one hundred pieces of cannon were mounted on them.

From the twenty-fourth of September, to the fourth of October, a heavy fire was maintained on both ſides; and ſome ſkirmiſhes took place, in which the garriſon were conſtantly ſucceſsful, and did conſiderable execution.

The enemy finding they could make no impreſſion on the works of the beſieged, reſolved on a bombardment, accompanied with a ſtronger cannonade than ever. To this purpoſe they opened, on the fourth of October, three batteries; one of thirty-ſeven, and another of ſixteen pieces of cannon, and a third of nine mortars. The firing from theſe batteries laſted, with little intermiſſion, during five days; but the damage they did was chiefly confined

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to the town, where it deſtroyed ſome houſes, and killed ſome women and children.

Hereupon General Prevoſt wrote a letter to Count D'Eſtaing, requeſting that the women and children might be permitted to retire from the town to a place of ſafety; but this requeſt was inſultingly refuſed both by Count D'Eſtaing and General Lincoln.

The Americans, mean while, were much diſſatisfied with the French commander; they blamed him for not having attacked the Britiſh troops immediately upon his landing, without giving them time to put themſelves in ſuch a ſtate of defence as they had now attained.

He began himſelf to looſe patience at the inutility of his cannonade, and to think it more adviſable to proceed at once to a general aſſault; hoping, from the number and goodneſs of his troops, to be more ſucceſsful than by the ſlow and gradual methods of attack, which had hitherto been employed, and of which the efficacy daily appeared more doubtful.

To this purpoſe, on the ninth of October, before the break of day, the French and Americans jointly attacked the Britiſh works with great fury. Count D'Eſtaing, accompanied by the principal officers of both armies, conducted the attack. They advanced upon the right of the Britiſh lines; and, favoured by a hollow piece of ground which covered them from the fire of the Britſh batteries, they approached in good order and great force, and aſſailed them with extraordinary fire and impetuoſity. Two of the enemy's ſtandards were actually planted upon the parapet of a redoubt, which was, during ſome time, aſſailed with the moſt obſtinate violence. Captain Taws, who commanded in the redoubt, was ſlain, with his ſword in the body of the third man he had killed with his own hand. But they

they met with ſo determined and firm a reſiſtance from an inceſſant fire of muſketry and cannon, levelled at them from almoſt every direction, that after making repeated efforts to force their way into the lines, they were thrown at lenth into diſorder from the terrible execution done among them, and appeared unable to ſtand their ground any longer.

This critical moment was ſeized with great preſence of mind. A body of grenadiers and marines ſallied forthwith out of the lines, and charged the enemy with ſuch fury, that the ditches of the redoubt, and a battery which they had ſeized, were cleared in an inſtant: they were broken and driven in the utmoſt confuſion into a ſwamp, on the ſide of the hollow which had favoured their approach.

By the time the enemy had been repulſed, it was broad day; but the weather was ſo foggy, and the ſmoke ſo thick, that it was not poſſible to diſcover the movements of the enemy. This, added to the conſideration of their vaſt ſuperiority in numbers, rendered General Prevoſt very circumſpectful in venturing far from his lines; and as much firing was heard from ſeveral quarters, it was judged ſafeſt to ſtand in readineſs to carry aſſiſtance, were it to be wanted.

Theſe precautions, though very proper, proved however unneceſſary, the enemy having been repulſed every where with prodigious ſlaughter. Twelve hundred were killed and wounded; among whom, the French themſelves acknowledged forty-four of their own officers. The famous Count Polaſki was mortally wounded in this engagement, and Count D'Eſtaing himſelf received two dangerous wounds.

To complete the ſucceſs of the Britiſh arms on this occaſion, a victory of ſo much importance, and which gained them ſo much reputation, was purchaſed at a very moderate price: the liſt of killed and wounded was no more than fifty-five; and the brave

brave Captain Tawes was the only officer that fell.

The courage and intrepidity diſplayed on this memorable day by the Britiſh officers and ſoldiers, was ſo great and ſtriking, that as General Prevoſt expreſſed himſelf in his account of the action, "To particularize thoſe who either did, or ſtrove to ſignalize themſelves beyond the reſt, would be to mention the whole army." Not only the military, but the naval liſt diſtinguiſhed itſelf in the moſt conſpicuous manner: the ſhips companies, with their officers, were all ſtationed aſhore, and equally partook of the dangers as well as of the honours that were gained.

One officer, however, was ſpoken of with ſuch applauſe by his General, that it would be injuſtice to paſs him unobſerved. This was Captain Moncrief, who, in the capacity of Engineer, conducted the plan of defence with ſo much judgment and and ſkill, that he was honoured wih the warmeſt and moſt unanimous applauſe of the whole army, and recommended in a manner at their deſire, as an officer deſerving of the higheſt notice and rewards: the French themſelves acknowledged their aſtoniſhment at the continual proofs of his abilities, of which they were witneſſes to their own coſt.

While the Britiſh troops were enjoying the ſatisfaction reſulting from the ſucceſs that was due to their conduct and valour, the enemy was in a condition of diſcontent and ſullenneſs, which had like to have terminated fatally. The Americans could not conceal their diſapprobation of the whole proceedings of Count D'Eſtaing; nor he the contemptuous light in which he held them. Reciprocal taunts and reproaches came to ſuch a height between both the officers and ſoldiers of either party, that it was once thought they would have proceeded to actual violence.

A motive

A motive which ſtrongly influenced the Americans upon this occaſion, was the jealouſy they had conceived againſt the French commander, on account of his having ſummoned General Prevoſt to ſurrender to the arms of France, without including thoſe of the United States of America.

They inferred from thence, that either he conſidered them as unworthy of the honour of being mentioned conjointly with the King of France, or that he meant to retain the Province of Georgia for that Crown, in caſe of a reduction. Whichever of the the two was the meaning of the French commander, it expoſed him equally to the indignation of the Americans.

To this it may be added, that the inhuman refuſal of the requeſt of General Prevoſt, for a permiſſion to the women and children to depart from the town of Savannah during the ſiege, was now by the French attributed to the Americans, whom they accuſed of brutality; and whoſe General, a French officer of rank, loaded with the coarſeſt and moſt injurious appellations, in common with his other countrymen.

This treatment of their commander, as it happened out of his hearing, the Americans repreſented as baſe and ſpiritleſs; and ſpoke of it in terms of the higheſt reſentment. Thus, animoſity and hatred were kindled between them to the higheſt pitch; and nothing but a conſciouſneſs of the neceſſity of keeping the peace between the two nations, would have prevented the French and the Americans from coming to the moſt deſperate extremities.

To atone for paſt incivilities, an offer was now made by Count D'Eſtaing, to grant the requeſt concerning the women and children; but it was ſpiritedly refuſed, as it now plainly appeared that there would be no occaſion to accept it.

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From the day of their repulſe, both the French and the Americans abandoned all further proſecution of the ſiege; and were wholly employed in preparing to retreat. After moving off their artillery, and embarking their ſick and wounded, of which they had a great number, the French broke up their camp in the night of the ſeventeenth, and retired with the utmoſt precipitation to their ſhipping. The Americans, on the other hand, croſſed the Savannah river, and withdrew into Carolina.

In this manner was the Province of Georgia cleared a third time of the enemy; after the moſt ſanguine expectations had been entertained by all America, that the reduction of this Province would have been but a preparatory ſtep to the expulſion of the Britiſh fleets and armies from every part of the continent.

It was not therefore, without exceſſive concern, that Congreſs was informed of the diſaſter that had attended the united arms of the French and American confederacy. It proved a heavy blow to their intereſt, and greatly lowered the hopes they had formed from the potent ſuccours the French Admiral had brought, and the deſigns he had laid before them.

Inſtead of having accompliſhed the ſmalleſt part of the ſcheme he had now projected, he met with the completeſt defeat on his very firſt attempt to carry the commencement of it into execution.

In lieu of that triumphant return to France, which the enemies to Great Britain had ſo often anticipated in their wiſhes and diſcourſes, he was obliged to make the beſt of his way home, with a ſickly and ill-conditioned fleet, part of which only he durſt venture to ſend back to the Weſt Indies.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVI.

French Manifeſto.—Engliſh Anſwer to it.—Proceedings of the Combined Fleets of France and Spain.

1779.

IN conſequence of the hoſtile notification on the part of Spain, preſented by the Ambaſſador of that Crown to the Court of London, its thoughts and attention were, of courſe, employed on the meaſures which that notification now rendered neceſſary. A proclamation was iſſued on the nineteenth of June, for the granting of letters of marque and repriſals againſt the ſubjects of Spain, and another to regulate the diſtribution of prizes that ſhould be taken during the continuance of the war with that nation.

In the mean time, as the confederacy now formed by America, France, and Spain againſt Great Britain, had attracted the eyes of all Europe, on ſo vaſt and important an object, the French miniſtry thought it incumbent on them to publiſh to the world ſuch arguments and motives for its conduct, as might afford a colourable pretext for the extraordinary meaſures they had adopted.

The performance that was compoſed in France to this intent, was remarkably ſpecious and artful, and ſhowed with what facility reaſons may be aſſigned for the moſt unjuſtifiable actions.

It began by reproaching the Court of London with inequitable and unfriendly treatment of the ſubjects of France in every quarter of the globe, and having exerciſed its power with great tyranny ever ſince the concluſion of the laſt peace.

Imputing the pacific diſpoſition of France to fear or feebleneſs, Great Britain had, according to her cuſtomary

cuſtomary ſyſtem, continued to harraſs the commerce and navigation of the French.

Repreſentations of theſe various outrages had been made to the Britiſh miniſtry. The Court of France, ſenſible of the embaraſſments in which that of London was involved with its American dominions, did not chuſe to increaſe them, by inſiſting too peremptorily on a reparation of theſe injuries.

"Such," in the words of the Manifeſto, "was "the poſition of affairs between the two Courts, "when the meaſures adopted in England compel- "led the Engliſh Coloniſts to have recourſe to arms, "in order to preſerve their rights, privileges, and "liberty. The whole world remembers the æra "when this brilliant event ſhone forth; the mul- "tiplied and unſucceſsful efforts made by the Ame- "ricans to be reinſtated in the favour of their mo- "ther country; the diſdainful manner in which "they were ſpurned by England; and, finally, "the act of independence, which was at length, "and, could not but have been the neceſſary "reſult of this treatment.

"The war in which the United States of Ame- "rica found themſelves involved with England, "neceſſarily compelled them to explore the means "of forming connections with the other powers of "Europe, and of opening a direct commerce with "them.

"The Court of France would have neglected "the moſt eſſential intereſts of the kingdom, had "it refuſed to the Americans an admiſſion into its "ports, or that participation of commercial advan- "tages which is enjoyed by every other nation.

"This conduct, ſo much the reſult of juſtice "and of wiſdom, was adopted by far the greater "part of the commercial ſtates of Europe; yet it "gave occaſion to the Court of London to vent "the moſt bitter complaints. Great Britain ima-

magined,

"gined, no doubt, that ſhe had but to employ "her uſual ſtile of haughtineſs, to obtain of France "an unbounded deference to her will: but to the "moſt unreaſonable propoſitions, and the moſt in- "temperate meaſures, his Majeſty oppoſed no- "thing but the calmneſs of juſtice, and the mode- "ration of reaſon. He gave the King of England "to underſtand, that he neither was, nor pretend- "ed to be a judge of the diſpute with his Colonies; "much leſs would it become his Majeſty to avenge "his quarrel. That in conſequence, he was under no "obligation to treat the Americans as rebels, to "exclude them from his ports, and to prohibit "them from all commercial intercourſe with his "own ſubjects."

The Manifeſto then proceeds to the injunctions of the Court of France, forbidding the exportation or ſale of arms and military ſtores to America, and to the permiſſion granted to England to prevent the French from carrying on ſuch a traffic with the Americans.

It aſſerts that France was ſcrupulouſly exact in obſerving every commercial ſtipulation in the treaty of Utrecht, although it was, according to the Manifeſto, daily violated by the Court of London, which, at this very time, had refuſed to ratify it. That the Americans were interdicted from arming, ſelling their prizes, or remaining any longer in the ports of France than was conſiſtent with the terms of that treaty.

"Theſe orders," ſays the manifeſto, "produ- "ced the deſired effect. But notwithſtanding this "condeſcenſion, and ſtrict adherence to a treaty, "which his Majeſty, had he been ſo diſpoſed, "might have conſidered as non-exiſting, the Court "of London was not ſatisfied. It affected to con- "ſider his Majeſty as reſponſible for all tranſgreſ- "ſions, although the King of England, notwith-

" ſtanding a ſolemn act of Parliament, could not " himſelf prevent his own merchants from furniſh- " ing the North American Colonies with mer- " chandiſe, and even with military ſtores.

" It is not difficult to conceive," ſays the Manifeſto, " how much the refuſal of yielding to the " aſſuming demands and arbitrary pretenſions of " England, would mortify the ſelf-ſufficiency of " that power, and revive its ancient animoſity to " France. It was the more irritated, from having " experienced ſome checks in America which prog- " noſticated the irrevocable ſeparation of its Colo- " nies. It foreſaw the inevitable loſſes and cala- " mities following from ſuch a ſeparation. It be- " held France profiting by that commerce which " it had with an inconſiderate hand thrown away, " and adopting every means to render her flag re- " ſpectable."

The Manifeſto next complains that England had, under the moſt frivolous and unjuſt pretences, interrupted the trade, and inſulted the flag of France in Europe as well as in America.

It adverted to the preparations that had been making in the ports of England, and which could not, from the nature of their appearance, have America for their object.

" His Majeſty, therefore," adds the Manifeſto, " found it indiſpenſible to make ſuch diſpoſitions " on his part, as might be ſufficient to prevent the " evil deſigns of his enemy, and prevent, at the " ſame time, inſults and depredations ſimilar to " thoſe committed in the year one thouſand ſeven " hundred and fifty-five.

" In this ſtate of things," continues the Manifeſto, " his Majeſty, who had hitherto rejected the " overtures of the United States of North America, " in contradiction to his moſt preſſing intereſts,

" now

"now perceived that he had not a moment to loſe "in concluding a treaty with them.

The Manifeſto proceeds to aſſert, "That nothing could be more ſimple, or leſs offenſive, than the reſcript delivered by the French Ambaſſador to the Britiſh miniſtry;—that the King of England firſt broke the peace, by recalling his Ambaſſador from the Court of France, and by announcing to his Parliament the French notification as an act of hoſtility. That it was abſurd to ſuppoſe that the recognition of American Independence on the part of France, could alone have irritated the King of England. The real cauſe of that animoſity which he had manifeſted, and communicated to his Parliament, was the inability to regain America, and turn her arms againſt France."

The King of France received the overtures of a mediation on the part of the King of Spain, with a ſincere deſire of rendering it effectual; but it was quickly diſcovered that the Court of London acted with diſingenuity: it required the King of France to withdraw his reſcript, as a preliminary ſtep to treating. Such a demand was injurious to Spain as well as to France; it placed the hoſtile intentions of England in the cleareſt point of view, and ſtruck both the French and Spaniſh Monarchs with equal amazement.

The ſailing of the fleets under Admirals Byron and Keppel, diſcloſed the real deſigns of England. The attacking of the Belle Poule, and the capture of two frigates, rendered the operations of the fleet under Count D'Orvilliers abſolutely neceſſary to fruſtrate the projects of the enemies to France, and to revenge the inſults offered to its flag.

The Court of London continued hoſtilities without a declaration of war, from its conſciouſneſs of wanting reaſons to juſtify its conduct. The Court of France, on the other hand, had hitherto delayed

notifying to the world the injuries it had received, from a fond hope that the Engliſh miniſtry would at laſt recollect itſelf; and that either juſtice, or the critical ſituation into which it had plunged England, would have wrought an alteration in its conduct.

In the mean time, the King of France liſtened with the utmoſt deference to the mediation and advice of the King of Spain; and communicated through his channel thoſe very moderate conditions on which he would moſt gladly have laid down his arms. But the Engliſh, though conſtantly feigning a deſire of peace, inſulted the Court of Spain with a tender of propoſitions that were inadmiſſible, and foreign to the ſubject of diſpute.

From this conduct, it was clear that England did not wiſh for peace; but negociated for no other purpoſe than to gain time to make the neceſſary preparations for war. Still however, the King of Spain continued his mediation, and exerted himſelf for the reſtoration of tranquility.

The Manifeſto then proceeds to ſtate the ſuſpenſion of arms, together with the other propoſals made by Spain to the belligerent powers that have been mentioned.

In conſequence of the refuſal of Great Britain to accede to theſe propoſals, it aſſerts the indiſpenſible neceſſity of exerciſing hoſtilities againſt this country.

"There is not a doubt," ſays the Manifeſto, "but theſe propoſals muſt appear to every well-judging perſon, ſuch as would have been accepted. They were, however, formally rejected by the Court of London; nor has that Court ſhewn any diſpoſition to peace, unleſs on the abſurd condition, that his Majeſty ſhould entirely abandon the Americans."

"After this afflicting declaration, the continuation of the war is become inevitable; and therefore his

his Majeſty has invited the Catholic King to join him in virtue of their reciprocal engagements, to avenge their reſpective injuries, and to put an end to that tyrannical empire, which England has uſurped, and pretends to maintain upon the ocean."

Such was in ſubſtance, and in part, the expoſition of the motives that induced France to engage in a war againſt Great Britain. By thoſe partiſans of that power, whom the jealouſy produced by the grandeur and proſperity of Britain had rendered ſo numerous, this Manifeſto was received with ſatisfaction, and duly countenanced; but by the diſintereſted and the intelligent part of ſociety, it was conſidered in no other light than as a meer palliation of facts, that were unjuſtifiable in their very nature; and as one of thoſe productions which cuſtom has rendered a neceſſary concomitance of the enterprizes reſulting from lawleſs ambition.

It was anſwered in a very able and maſterly manner, by a memorial written in juſtification of the conduct obſerved on the part of England. Never were the deſigns of France, and the meaſures employed by her to carry them into execution, laid forth with more explicit evidence, and accuracy of repreſentation: nor the many allegations and pretences on which ſhe founded the rectitude of her conduct, expoſed and refuted with more ſtrength of reaſoning.

The publication of this celebrated performance, though it did not ſilence thoſe individuals either in France or in America, who were determined to defame the character of the Britiſh nation, yet conveyed ample conviction to the minds of the unprejudiced, how little the French were warranted to complain of the conduct of Britain reſpecting them; and that nothing but their irradicable diſpoſition to domineer over their neighbours, had excited them to embrace what they imagined was a favourable op-

portunity of reducing the power of that people, who had always proved the moſt formidable obſtructors of this inequitable deſign.

This compoſition entered into a minute review of the meaſures purſued by France, ever ſince the commencement of the diſpute between Great Britain and her Colonies: it recapitulated, with great preciſion, the numerous inſtances wherein the Court of France had manifeſted a partiality to the Coloniſts, and a determination to ſupport them effectually, by conniving at, or rather indeed encouraging its ſubjects, to afford them all the aſſiſtance and ſuccours that were neceſſary to enable them to combat the efforts of Great Britain to reduce them to obedience.

It repreſented, with great force, the duplicity exerciſed by the Court of France in the correſpondence relating to this unfriendly, or to ſpeak with more propriety, this inimical behaviour to a power that had given it no provocation. It ſhewed, by a circumſtantial enumeration of facts aſcertained by clear and authentic documents, that the grievances complained of by the Britiſh miniſtry, were real and undeniable; but that the complaints of France were unfounded, and her aſſertions of ill uſage on the part of England, vague and declamatory.

It ſhewed that the mediation of Spain was accompanied with an evident biaſs in favour of France, that the terms propoſed by that Court could not therefore be accepted by that of Great Britain conſiſtently with its dignity; and that the rejection of them was no ſufficient provocation to juſtify the part taken by Spain againſt England.

A reply came out in France to this memorial, which denied ſome of the facts therein contained; but it was written with much more warmth than judgment; and was by no means calculated to remove the impreſſion made by the powerful arguments

ments of the former. It was replete with invectives againſt the Engliſh nation; which its principal aim was to render odious, and to repreſent as deſerving the enmity of all the world.

The Manifeſto publiſhed at Paris in vindication of the conduct of France, was accompanied by another iſſued at Madrid, in defence of the acceſſion of Spain to the alliance of France and America againſt Great Britain. It was conceived much in the ſame terms as the reſcript delivered to the Britiſh miniſtry by Count Almadovar; and was altogether a heavy and nerveleſs compoſition; proving only that Spain was determined to find pretexts for joining the confederacy againſt this country.

Elate with the acquiſition of ſo potent an ally, France began now to form the moſt extenſive projects againſt the Britiſh nation. The French imagined that their preſent ſuperiority was ſo deciſive and irreſiſtable, that Britain would inevitably be cruſhed by its weight. A conqueſt of this iſland was the common topic of diſcourſe among them; and preparations for ſuch an attempt were apparently making in all the provinces of that kingdom contiguous to the ſea coaſt.

Upon receiving intelligence of them, a proclamation was iſſued to put the nation upon its guard. Orders were circulated for a ſtrict watch to be kept in all the maritime counties, with injunctions for the immediate removal of cattle and proviſions to a proper diſtance, upon the approach of an enemy.

The ſuperiority which Britain had maintained at ſea, during the preceding ſummer, and the prodigious ſucceſſes of her cruizers and privateers on the French coaſt, had equally diſtreſſed and alarmed the Court of France. As ſoon as it thought itſelf ſecure of the coalition of Spain, it began to form

new arrangements in regard of its marine, and to turn its attention to foreign enterprizes.

It was the more intent upon projects of this nature, as it deemed them indiſpenſibly neceſſary to efface the impreſſions which the late immenſe loſſes of the commercial property of the French had made on the minds of their neighbours, and to remove the perſuaſion that ſeemed to have taken place, that Britain would ſtill prove an overmatch for the naval power of France.

Purſuant to this idea, a ſquadron was fitted out, of which the ultimate deſtination was to reinforce Count D'Eſtaing in the Weſt Indies. It was commanded by the Marquis of Vadreuil; and the troops that accompanied it, which were very numerous, were under the Duke of Lauſun.

Its firſt expedition was to the weſtern coaſts of Africa, where it attacked and took, without any difficulty, the Britiſh forts and ſettlements on the rivers of Senegal and Gambia; the garriſons of which were too feeble to make any reſiſtance againſt ſo great a force. This happened in the month of February, ſeventy-nine.

They thought proper on this occaſion to quit an iſland already their own. This was Goree; which had been taken from them during the laſt war, and reſtored at the peace. They removed the artillery and garriſon to Senegal. But they ſoon had reaſon to repent their abandoning this iſland, the ſituation of which is far from diſadvantageous or uſeleſs in the proſecution of trade. Shortly after their departure, Sir Edward Hughes, on his paſſage to the Eaſt Indies, being apprized of what happened, landed a body of troops on that iſland, of which the fortifications were immediately put in a proper ſtate of defence.

Theſe, however, being diſtant acquiſitions of no great importance, it was thought requiſite, after the

the vaſt expectations that had been raiſed among the people of France, to undertake ſomething nearer home, and which might cheriſh thoſe ideas of conqueſt with which they began to indulge their imaginations.

Out of the extenſive dominions which in former ages belonged to the Kings of England on the continent, nothing but the empty title of King of France remains in their poſſeſſion. This, with the iſles of Jerſey and Guernſey, is all they have retained abroad.

Theſe two iſlands France now formed the project of ſeizing. Her vanity, no leſs than her intereſt was concerned in depriving Britain of thoſe only remnants of her ancient power and greatneſs in France.

A force of five or ſix thouſand men was collected for this purpoſe It embarked in fifty flat-bottom boats, and attempted a landing in the bay of St. Ouen, in the iſle of Jerſey, on the firſt day of May; but though they were ſupported by five frigates, and other armed veſſels, the militia of the iſland, with a body of regulars, made ſo reſolute a defence, that they were compelled to retire, without one man having ſet his foot on ſhore.

But if the French miſcarried in this enterprize, it was, though indirectly, productive of no little benefit to their American allies. A fleet of near four hundred merchantmen and tranſports, was on the point of ſailing from England to New York, under the convoy of a ſquadron commanded by Admiral Arbuthnot. But this officer being informed of the French attack upon Jerſey, thought it his duty to lead his ſquadron with all ſpeed to the aſſiſtance of that iſland. On his return to Torbay, where the fleet was waiting for him, contrary winds, and unfavourable weather, detained him there a full month; and his paſſage to America was ſo tedious, that he did

did not arrive at the place of his deſtination till near the expiration of Auguſt.

This was a heavy retardment to the operations of the forces at New York. The fleet was laden with warlike ſtores, camp equipages, proviſions, and neceſſaries of all kinds, beſides conſiderable reinforcements: but arriving ſo late in the year, Sir Henry Clinton, who, relying on theſe ſupplies, had formed ſeveral projects of importance, was totally diſabled from carrying them into execution.

Much diſcontent and mutual recrimination among the French naval and military officers was occaſioned by their failure at Jerſey. The attempt was repreſented by many as ill concerted, and worſe executed, and as deficient in point of every requiſite to authoriſe any hope of ſucceſs.

The French, however, were ſtill determined to make another attempt. Both the troops and ſeamen that had been employed in the former, were equally deſirous of retrieving their honour; but as the weather oppoſed them, they were obliged to defer it. Mean while, Sir James Wallace, with a ſmall ſquadron, one of which was a ſhip of fifty guns, came in ſight of that which was to cover the deſcent. It conſiſted of ſeveral large frigates, with other armed veſſels. On his appearance, they made the beſt of their way to the coaſt of Normandy, where they ran aſhore in a ſmall bay, under the cover of a battery. He purſued them to the bottom of the bay, ſilenced the guns of the battery, forced the French to abandon their ſhips, captured a frigate of thirty-four guns, with two rich prizes, and burned two other large frigates, and a conſiderable number of other veſſels.

This gallant action entirely diſcouraged the ſcheme of invaſion intended againſt the iſland of Jerſey. From this time it appears to have been totally laid aſide; and though a ſhow was kept up along

along the oppoſite coaſts of France, yet from the vigilance of the Britiſh cruizers, it was rendered totally ineffectual.

In the mean time it was much to be apprehended that the deſigns of the Houſe of Bourbon were to invade Great Britain itſelf. The vaſt naval ſuperiority of which they would be poſſeſſed on the junction of the French and Spaniſh fleets, would give them ſuch a command of the Channel, as would put it in their power to chuſe both the time and place of deſcent.

But were the military preparations in England to deter them from attacking it, Ireland lay open to an attempt, from the inconſiderableneſs of the regular force remaining in that kingdom, owing to the large drafts which had been made from the regiments on that eſtabliſhment to reinforce the armies and garriſons abroad.

It was chiefly this part of the Britiſh dominions for which moſt apprehenſions were, entertained, Though the wiſhes of the French nation itſelf pointed to England as the principal object of their attention. So great was the deſire and ardour of the generality of people throughout France for a direct invaſion of this country, that the government whatever might be its real intent, thought fit to give it every kind of countenance and encouragement. The ſelecteſt troops in the French ſervice were drawn out of their cantonments, and marched to the provinces bordering on the Britiſh Channel: tranſports were prepared in every convenient ſea-port, a great promotion was made of General officers, and thoſe commanders were publicly appointed who were to have charge of this important expedition.

So warm and ſanguine were the expectations of all claſſes, that the regiments deſtined for this buſineſs were crouded with volunteers and ſupernumeraries. The univerſal eagerneſs to have a ſhare

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in the conqueſt of England, rouſed the emulation of all the families of any diſtinction. The public ſchools and colleges, in many places, were emptied of all the youth that were thought fit to participate in ſo glorious an undertaking: and many elderly gentlemen, worn out in the fatigues of a military life, reſolved on this occaſion to ſummon the remains of their former ſtrength and vigour, and to dedicate their laſt ſcenes to a tranſaction, from whence it was expected that France would derive ſo much grandeur and fame.

In the midſt of theſe flattering projects, it was neceſſary to form a junction of the French and Spaniſh naval force, before any attempt could be made to realize them. The incapacity of France, till aſſiſted by Spain, to accompliſh the ends ſhe had in view, became daily more evident. The fleet intended to act againſt England conſiſted of no more than twenty-eight ſhips of the line, and thoſe not in a good condition: the Britiſh fleet, on the other hand, that was to oppoſe it, amounted to thirty-eight ſail of the line.

As the deſign of invading this iſland was publicly avowed on the other ſide of the water, it was reſolved, as the moſt ready means of defeating it, to prevent a junction of the allied fleets. To this purpoſe it was intended to block up that of France in the port of Breſt: but the endeavours made with that view did not ſucceed. Wind, weather, and other cauſes occaſioned unavoidable delays, and in the mean time Count D'Orvilliers left this harbour in the beginning of June, and ſailed with all expedition to the coaſt of Spain, where he joined the Spaniſh fleet.

This junction gave the united fleets a moſt formidable appearance. They conſiſted of between ſixty and ſeventy ſhips of the line, beſides a very great proportion of large frigates, and a multitude of other armed veſſels. This prodigious armament, like the famous

famous Armada of Spain two centuries before, filled all Europe with anxiety and conjectures concerning the iſſue of its operations. The enemies of this country looked upon its downfall as being certainly at hand; while even its well-wiſhers could not forbear conſidering its ſituation as highly critical.

The firſt movement of the combined fleets was to ſteer conjointly towards the coaſt of England.—Sir Charles Hardy, with the Britiſh fleet, was at this time cruiſing in the entrance of the Channel. The enemy, however, paſſed him unobſerved, and entered the narrow ſeas about the middle of Auguſt. They came in ſight of Plymouth, where they captured the Ardent of ſixty-four guns, on her way to the fleet, but made no attempt to land any where, or to attack any place.

The wind ſetting in ſtrongly from the Eaſt, compelled them to quit the Channel: on its abating, they reſumed their ſtation in ſight of the Britiſh coaſt, about the Land's End, and the chops of the Channel. On the laſt day of Auguſt Sir Charles Hardy made good his entrance into the Channel, in full view of the enemy, who either did not endeavour, or were not able to prevent him. His deſign was to entice them up to the narroweſt part of the Channel, where, in caſe of his coming to action, the advantage of numbers would not be ſo deciſive as in the open ſea; and where, if they ſhould be worſted, they would find themſelves entangled in many difficulties; and would even, without ſuch an event, be expoſed to much danger, from the frequent variation of winds, and other local cauſes.

The combined fleets followed him as far as Plymouth, but did not think it adviſable to proceed any farther. The reaſons they aſſigned were a great ſickneſs and mortality among their people, by which ſome of their ſhips were totally diſabled; the bad condition of theſe, moſt of which required immediate

diate repair, and the proximity of the ſtormy winds of the equinox.

From theſe motives, they found themſelves under the neceſſity of abandoning the Engliſh coaſt, and of repairing to Breſt, in about three weeks from their firſt appearance in the Channel, without having intercepted any part of the Eaſt or Weſt India trade, as they had propoſed, and without having made the leaſt impreſſion on the naval ſtrength of Great Britain, notwithſtanding their immenſe ſuperiority, and the contumelious boaſtings with which they had filled every Court in Europe.

This retreat of the combined navies of France and Spain, from the ſhores of Britain, without having effected any part of the plan they had univerſally given out with ſuch unlimited confidence and pride, ſtruck all Europe with aſtoniſhment, and covered the French themſelves with confuſion. It was in vain they pretended that cauſes againſt which no human efforts can prevail, had combated for the Engliſh: it was ſhrewdly ſuſpected, the fact was, that ſuperior as they were, they did not however dare to commit their fortune to a fair and deciſive trial of ſkill and valour with ſo reſolute and deſperate a body of men, as the Britiſh ſeamen are juſtly reputed.

Though near double the number of the Britiſh fleet in ſhipping, and treble in that of men, their commanders well knew what opponents they would have to encounter. They were not ignorant of the ſurpriſing deeds of courage and dexterity performed by the naval claſſes of this nation in caſes of extremity, and were from that motive extremely averſe to compel them to their utmoſt exertions.

Such was the general opinion of Europe. It was further corroborated by the daringneſs with which the Britiſh fleet continued to keep the ſeas, after the combined fleets had retired into port, by the multiplicity

tiplicity of captures that were daily made of French and Spaniſh veſſels upon their own coaſts, as well as in every part of the world, and by the uninterrupted arrival from all quarters of the Britiſh commercial fleets.

The invincible ſpirit with which Britain faced ſuch numerous and formidable enemies, was the more worthy of admiration, as the kingdom was in the mean while torn with civil diſſentions of the moſt alarming nature. Excluſive of thoſe political altercations which had ſo long diſturbed its internal peace, religious fury, the moſt dreadful of all human phrenzies, had lighted up a flame which begun to threaten a violent conflagration, and which excited the moſt grievous apprehenſions in all thinking people.

The unfortunate differences of opinion concerning the American war, ſtill continued to divide all denominations. The conviction of its inutility for the purpoſes that cauſed it, and the impatience of its long continuance, began to ſower the minds even of thoſe who had moſt approved of coercive meaſures. As theſe had proved completely ineffectual; or, indeed, to ſpeak the truth, had produced the moſt calamitous effects, the far greater majority of people was heartily deſirous they ſhould be relinquiſhed, and the ſtrength of the nation no longer waſted in attempts, which experience had ſhewn to be impracticable and ruinous.

The great argument now pleaded, was the irreſiſtible neceſſity of complying with the exigency of the times. The affairs of this country were involved in difficulties ſolely on account of its obſtinate adherence to the ſyſtem hitherto purſued in America. Were it to caſt off that oppreſſive burden, it would then be able to put forth its ſtrength to advantage; but while it moved under ſo heavy a load, its powers were neceſſarily cramped, and it could

could not reaſonably expect to act with a vigour adequate to the arduous trial impoſed upon it by the imprudence of thoſe who had ſo long and ſo unfortunately been truſted with the adminiſtration of its concerns.

Theſe were the general ſentiments of the nation at this period. Many of thoſe who had been warm advocates of miniſtry, began now to deſert it, and to call for a total change of its proceedings, with as much earneſtneſs as they had formerly manifeſted in ſupporting them.

But whatever diverſity of opinion they might hold upon other matters, the whole nation agreed to a man in one point, and that was the moſt ſpirited proſecution of the war againſt France and Spain. Here it was that Britain ſhould exert the courage and abilities of the many gallant officers in her ſervices: ſhe had reſources enough, by directing them properly, to make the Houſe of Bourbon repent her combination againſt this country.

In the mean time, the zeal that had been roused for the defence of the nation, continued to operate with unabated fervour. Large ſums were ſubſcribed in the ſeveral counties, and employed in raiſing volunteers, and forming them into regiments and independent companies, as beſt ſuited the military circumſtances of the counties to which they belonged. Aſſociations were alſo framed in the towns; where the inhabitants armed themſelves, and beſtowed no little portion of their time and attention in acquiring a ſufficiency of warlike knowledge and diſcipline, to enable them to be uſeful in caſe of any preſſing emergency.

Among thoſe public bodies of men who ſignalized their attachment to the public cauſe, the Eaſt India Company diſtinguiſhed itſelf in a manner worthy of its opulence and grandeur. It preſented government with a ſum for the levying of ſix thouſand

ſeamen

ſeamen, and added at its own coſt three ſeventy-four gun ſhips to the navy.

Other pecuniary donations were made by the corporate bodies of the kingdom, beſides a multitude that came from the private purſes of individuals. Through theſe abundant ſupplies, no encouragement was wanted for the purpoſes of manning the navy, or recruiting the army.

This dauntleſs behaviour, and theſe immenſe reſources, placed this country in ſo reſpectable a light, that Europe now began to entertain quite other ideas of the iſſue of the conteſt between Great Britain and the Houſe of Bourbon, than thoſe which the firſt appearance of this grand confederacy had ſuggeſted.

Two important objects ſtruck the diſcerning part of the world. The wretched condition of the navy of the combined powers, and the exceſſive œconomy brought into every department of the finances in France.

In the vaſt number of ſhips, of which the French and Spaniſh fleets were compoſed, there was hardly any that did not ſtand in need of great, and moſt did of thorough repair. When they put to ſea at the commencement of the naval campaign, they were prodigiouſly deficient in a number of capital requiſites; and notwithſtanding the multitude of hands employed in both kingdoms, they ſailed out of port in a very incomplete ſtate of preparation. This deficiency betrayed a material want either of means, or of expertneſs in the uſe of them, or perhaps of both.

The rigid parſimony adopted by France, on the other hand, was ſingular and unprecedented in that monarchy. In the late reign, when reduced by Great Britain during the laſt war to the moſt mortifying difficulties, the Court of Verſailles had not bethought itſelf of ſuch rigorous expedients as thoſe

which had lately been practiſed. True it was, they bore the ſeemingneſs of patriotiſm in the government; but they were not the leſs oppreſſive and ruinous to numerous claſſes of individuals; they evidently ſhewed that the French miniſtry found itſelf in very unuſual and alarming ſtraits, and compelled to make uſe of all the ways and means that could be deviſed, however grievous they might prove to thoſe who were affected by them, or whatever indications they might afford to the world of the exhauſted condition of the kingdom.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVII.

Proceedings in Parliament.

1779.

THE ſeſſion of Parliament was opened on the twenty-fifth of November, with a ſpeech from the Throne, exhorting the nation to continue in thoſe ſentiments of unanimity in the defence of the kingdom, on which its ſafety depended. It congratulated the public on the firmneſs and courage univerſally diſplayed in this critical ſituation: it took notice that the menaces of the enemy, and the approach of danger, had no other effect on the minds of the people of this country, than to animate their courage, and to call forth that national ſpirit which had ſo often defeated the projects of their ambitious neighbours. It concluded with a reſolute declaration to proſecute the war with the utmoſt vigour, and to make the ſtrongeſt exertions, in order to compel the enemy to liſten to equitable terms of accommodation.

The ſpeech was received with due reſpect, and met with thoſe aſſurances of attachment to the Crown, and determination to aſſiſt it with the full power of the nation, which were proper in its preſent circumſtances; but to the addreſs which conveyed theſe ſentiments, an amendment was propoſed by oppoſition in both Houſes, importing the neceſſity of changing both meaſures and miniſters in this ſeaſon of unexampled danger.

It repreſented, in firm and explicit terms, the difference between the preſent and the paſt condition of the kingdom at the commencement of the pre-

ſent reign. The vaſt extent of the Britiſh empire at that aera, its opulence, its proſperity, its grandeur, its glory, the reſpect and dread of foreign nations, the concord of all people at home, and the harmony that ſubſiſted between this country and its immenſe dominions abroad.

It then adverted to the dreadful alteration that had taken place in every part of the repreſentation. It ſtated that no other expedient could prevent the final ruin of the kingdom, but the removal of thoſe perſons, whoſe ill-advice had occaſioned all theſe calamities, and an unfeigned adoption of meaſures entirely new and different from the paſt.

The members of oppoſition took on this occaſion a wide range of retroſpect into all the ſubjects of animadverſion that had been ſo often debated in Parliament.

They aſcribed the diſaſters that had befallen Great Britain, to a pernicious ſyſtem of government, tending in its nature to eradicate every ſalutary maxim that binds ſociety. The unhappy progreſs of this ſyſtem had already impaired the character of the nation, and was levelled at the ruin of its conſtitution. However artfully covered by thoſe who conducted it, the diſcerning public had long obſerved its riſe and advance with the ſtrongeſt deteſtation and concern.

This baneful ſyſtem was founded on that iniquitous principle of all narrow minds, to ſet people at variance in order to rule them. This precept, it was ſaid, had been ſo ſtedfaſtly obſerved, that the navy, the army, the parliament; the adminiſtration itſelf were full of diſcord and diſſention. Suſpicion and jealouſy infected all claſſes, and animoſities had been ſown throughout all diſtinctions of ſubjects in the realm. Hence proceeded confuſion in the various departments of government, and that ill

ill underſtanding among the executive branches, which had been productive of ſo much miſchief.

To the general diſunion which had been generated by this ſyſtem, was manifeſtly due the diſmemberment of the Britiſh empire, and the terrible dangers to which the kingdom itſelf was now expoſed. But notwithſtanding the continual warnings ariſing from a conſtant ſeries of unproſperous events, it was ſtill purſued with unabated obſtinacy, and threatened nothing leſs than abſolute deſtruction to the ancient government of this country.

As the authors of this ruinous ſyſtem remained concealed, it behoved the public to inſiſt on the removal of its oſtenſible inſtruments. The powers that had been intruſted to them, they had exerciſed ſo much to the detriment of the ſtate, that they were evidently unfit for the poſts they had ſo long, and ſo unfortunately occupied.

They were the more unworthy of the confidence ſo undeſervedly repoſed in them, as they ſeemed to bear an inveterate malice to every man that rendered himſelf conſpicuous by his extraordinary merit and ſervices to the ſtate. Whether in the civil, in the naval, or the military line, whoever ſtood high in the opinion of his country, was ſingled out as an object of their diſlike, and compelled by ill uſage to relinquiſh his ſtation. In this manner, the army and the navy had loſt ſome of their moſt eminent officers, at a time when they were moſt wanted and moſt called upon by their country.

The next objects adverted to by oppoſition, were the events of the preceding ſummer. It was reſerved, ſaid they, for the adminiſtration of the preſent day, to bring that mortification upon Great Britain which ſhe had never experienced before. Her coaſts had beheld the fleets of the Houſe of Bourbon parading in thoſe ſeas, of which the dominion was peculiarly her own, by the univerſal aſſent

of all nations. They had insulted our very shores in the sight of our fleets; through the inferiority of which the enemy had reigned unmolested master of the Channel."

These were facts that ought to cover ministry with shame, as they had justly exposed them to the indignation of all men who retained any feeling for the honour of their country. Notwithstanding the enemy had made no impression, it was a sufficient disgrace for Englishmen to have permitted him to retire unhurt from so daring an insult to this kingdom. The flags of France and Spain flying uninterrupted in view of the British shore, was an instance unprecedented in our annals; and those to whom such a reproach was owing, were amenable to the justice of their country.

The unguarded situation of Plymouth, and the junction of the French and Spanish fleets, were next animadverted upon. The first was attributed to neglect and inattention; the second to unnecessary delay, and want of due activity. Both were highly censurable, as they had laid the realm open to dangers that might, and ought therefore to have been avoided, and consequently admitted of no excuse or palliation.

The attack upon Jersey arose from the same causes. A very small proportion of frigates, properly stationed, would have obviated that attempt. The fleet and convoy, then on their departure for America, would not have been detained: they would have reached their destination in time, and enabled the army there to have made a vigorous campaign; whereas, for want of the necessary supplies of men
w stores contained in that fleet, the season for action
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Thro rious power collected for the services of
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the nation, lay in a great meaſure uſeleſs and unexerted. The regular troops and militia, now employed for the internal defence of the kingdom, exceeded one hundred thouſand men. This was a force much greater than neceſſary for that ſole purpoſe. Conſiderable parts of it ought to have been detached abroad, to annoy the enemy in thoſe many places where we knew them to be vulnerable.

The imprudence of miniſtry was inexcuſable in aſſigning ſo large a proportion of the national ſtrength to the military eſtabliſhment at home: nor was their want of ability leſs apparent, in the narrow and confined uſe they had made of the immenſe force of which the nation was at preſent in poſſeſſion. The computation of the naval and military liſt belonging to this country, in Great Britain, Ireland, and other parts of the world, conſiſted of no leſs than three hundred thouſand men: the navy conſiſted of more than three hundred ſail, including frigates and armed veſſels: twenty millions had been expended for the ſervice of the preſent year; and yet, with this enormous maſs of treaſure and of power, the utmoſt boaſt of miniſtry was, that they had kept the enemy at bay, and fruſtrated the meaſures he had planned for an invaſion of this iſland. But this was a very inadequate recompence for the prodigious efforts this nation had made, to enable its rulers to preſerve its reputation and dignity unſullied, and to maintain it on that formidable footing, which had rendered it ſo long the terror of all its enemies, and in a great degree the arbiter of Europe.

From theſe heavy imputations, oppoſition proceeded to cenſure the arrangements that had taken place reſpecting the new raiſed forces. Veteran officers, of tried valour and experience, had been paſt by to make room for younger men of far inferior merit. Thus equal injuſtice was done to the public, as well to individuals: commands were

given to ſuch as were leſs deſerving and able to fill them with honour to themſelves and advantage to the ſtate, than others, to whom they were unjuſtly preferred; and men who had ſpent their lives and fortunes in expectation of being promoted according to their rank, were now oppreſſively and tyrannically denied their cleareſt right, to the diſcouragement of all military worth, and to the great ſcandal of the nation.

Ireland was the next object of their reprehenſion. The diſſatisfaction of the Iriſh ought to have been obviated by complying with their demands, which were juſt and reaſonable, and ſuch as ought long ago to have been granted without their aſking.

The loſſes in the Weſt Indies were dwelt upon with the utmoſt ſeverity. Want of ſufficient garriſons was the ſole cauſe of the capture of thoſe iſlands that had fallen into the hands of the enemy: this was a neglect of which miniſtry was undeniably guilty. There was plenty of troops for thoſe purpoſes, and they could not have been employed in a more uſeful and neceſſary ſervice, than in the protection of our Weſt India iſlands; from which we derived ſuch a conſiderable portion of our reſources, and which lay ſo much expoſed to the attacks of the enemy.

The conduct of miniſtry, it was ſaid, had been ſo glaringly erroneous, that people of the plaineſt underſtandings were aſtoniſhed at their imbecility. It was the univerſal cry of the nation, that they ought to be diſmiſſed without heſitation. No further proofs could be deſired of their incapacity. It had gone ſo far, and was ſo viſible to all men, that it was become a matter of general ſurprize, how they durſt preſume to retain their places, in direct contradiction to the wiſhes of the nation at large, and notwithſtanding their own conſciouſneſs of the terrible calamities they had occaſioned.

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The miniſterial anſwer to theſe various charges, was very circumſtantial, and no leſs firm and ſpirited. It totally and peremptorily denied the exiſtence of that odious ſyſtem of government, which oppoſition had deſcribed in ſuch opprobrious colours. It was a meer creature of imagination, founded upon the animoſity of party, but wholly devoid of reality. True it was, that diviſions had long ſubſiſted both in the deliberative and executive branches of government; but they proved no more than that a violent attachment to their different opinions had carried individuals beyond the bounds of moderation. Precedents of this kind were numerous in this country; and yet it was not recorded that they had ever been attributed to the purſuit of any ſyſtem ſimilar to that which was now imputed to the preſent miniſtry. Aſſertions without proof were unworthy of notice or anſwer; and the charges advanced by oppoſition, were bold affirmations without any ſpecification of facts, built upon rumours, propagated by ſuch as had been diſappointed in their unreaſonable views, and who were determined to embarraſs the meaſures of their more ſucceſsful competitors.

This alone was the foundation of that malicious obloquy which had of late years attended people in power in a degree ſeldom precedented. Were the members of oppoſition to become ſo powerful as to poſſeſs themſelves of the reins of government, they would experience the ſame treatment; and ought not to imagine, from the multitude of objections and cenſures with which they aſſailed the preſent plans of adminiſtration, that their own would meet with a more favourable reception.

As to the violent and reiterated cry of new men and new meaſures, it was abſurd and nugatory. It could not mean a relaxation of the national ſpirit and vigour. It could not intend any ſort of conceſ-

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ſion to the enemy, that would be attended with diſgrace. If its purport was to encourage fortitude and perſeverance againſt the efforts of our numerous foes, it did no more than what adminiſtration laboured with all its might to inculcate at this preſent time; and had always endeavoured to make the ruling principle of its meaſures.

Changes in the different provinces of adminiſtration, reſignations in the civil or military departments of the ſtate, were not ſuch novelties as people ſhould convert into objects of wonder or of diſſatisfaction: they were the natural conſequences of altercations; and theſe were unavoidable in a free government. No inſulting diſmiſſion had taken place; due conſideration had been ſhewn to the pretenſions of every man; no one had been ſilenced in his juſt defence: as to heats and animoſities, they would always exiſt while the paſſions of men exiſted: and they were more difficult to prevent, or to repreſs, in this, than in any country upon earth, while it preſerved that ſpirit of liberty which naturally prompted individuals to declare their ſentiments without reſtraint, and to cenſure with unbounded freedom, thoſe meaſures which they diſ approved, together with their authors and abettors.

The ſtrictures of oppoſition on the conduct of miniſtry, for permitting the fleets of France and Spain to appear unmoleſted in the Channel, were deſcribed as void of all candour. The naval ſtrength of the Houſe of Bourbon had been almoſt wholly collected upon this occaſion, while that of Britain lay neceſſarily ſcattered in various parts of the world. The ſuperiority of the enemy was ſo great, that it would have been the height of imprudence to have encountered them without the extremeſt neceſſity. But what had been the iſſue of this vaſt force, and of the vauntings it had occaſioned? The French and Spaniards came into the Channel; but

but they did not dare to remain there; they had a fair opportunity of engaging the Britiſh fleet, but they declined it; they had threatened an invaſion, but they did not even make a ſhew of attempting it; they felt the ſuperiority of ſkill of their opponents, and were averſe to call it into action.

The truth was, that with forty ſail of the line, the Britiſh Admiral had, by the prudence and judiciouſneſs of his conduct, foiled the deſigns of an enemy who had ſixty-ſix. In defiance of this tremendous ſuperiority, our trade and ſhipping had been effectually protected, and no advantage gained by the enemy. The prodigious expence they were at in fitting out ſo formidable an armament, was totally ſunk, and rendered of no efficacy; and they themſelves damped in the moſt exceſſive degree, and entirely diſpirited from renewing ſuch an expedition againſt this country.

The junction of the two fleets was an event that happened againſt all reaſonable expectation. That of France was in ſo inadequate a ſtate of preparation for ſailing, that nothing but the dread of being incercepted by that of Britain, in caſe of any longer ſtay at Breſt, induced it to quit that port. Had it remained there till completely ready, it could not have avoided the Britiſh fleet.

The attack upon Jerſey was repreſented as one of thoſe occurrences in war, which no vigilance can prevent. It was ſufficient in ſuch caſes that the enemy was repelled, and the national credit preſerved. More could not be required from the moſt provident and braveſt of men.

The danger threatened at Plymouth was much greater in appearance than in reality. The motions of the enemy did not indicate that any deſcent was intended in that quarter. Had it been their intention, it was far from being ſo ill provided to give them a proper reception, as had been ſurmiſed. There

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was a ſufficiency of troops in its neighbourhood to repair to its aſſiſtance, before the enemy could have effected any material detriment.

The ſituation of Ireland was acknowledged to be alarming; but no complaints could be equitably formed againſt the preſent adminiſtration, which had done more to redreſs the grievances of that country, than any former one, and was unfeignedly determined to take away all cauſes of diſcontent, and to place the Iriſh nation on ſuch a footing, as would put an end to all motives of diſſatisfaction.

The chances of war had not proved favourable to Great Britain in the Weſt Indies; but the loſs it had ſuſtained there had been in ſome meaſure counter-balanced by the capture of one of the French iſlands; and ſtill more by the honour the Britiſh arms had acquired, in defeating by ſea and land a force much ſuperior to their own.

The domeſtic arrangements in the military, were inevitable conſequences of the meaſures which government had been obliged to adopt in the preſent exigency of it affairs. The pretenſions of individuals who contributed by their fortunes and their perſonal influence and exertions, to the ſtrengthening of the army, could not, in juſtice or in policy, be overlooked; but even in theſe caſes, merit was not forgotten; and every care had been taken to prevent any military truſt from being placed in improper hands.

The charge of not employing the national force to advantage, was ſtrongly denied. The principal object during the two laſt years, was to ſhew that the ſtrength of this nation was ſuch, when called forth, as would intimidate every enemy from projecting the invaſion of this iſland. A conviction of this would depreſs the arrogance of the enemy, and by rendering him leſs confident of ſucceſs, would induce him to be more willing to liſten to

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honourable terms of accommodation, and leſs diſpoſed to perſiſt in hoſtilities, from which no advantages could be obtained.

It was no longer to be doubted, that France and Spain were thoroughly perſuaded that their deſigns againſt this iſland would be fruſtrated were they to attempt their execution. They were alſo convinced of another truth, equally operating againſt this deſign, which was, that to load their ſhips with crouds of men unuſed to the ſeas, and compelled, againſt their inclination, to a ſervice for which they were totally unfit, was leading them to deſtruction. It was in vain to expect that ſuch men could have either activity or good-will; they would ſoon be diſabled by the fatigues and hardſhips of an element to which they were not bred; their minds would be diſpirited, and their bodies enfeebled; illneſs would of courſe enſue, with all its inconveniencies and miſeries, and force them at once to abandon their projects.

As to the requiſition contained in the amendment to the addreſs, that the King ſhould diſmiſs the preſent miniſtry, and adopt new meaſures, it involved an accuſation of miniſters, to which, as they were not bound, neither were they willing to ſubſcribe. They had for years undergone reproaches from the adverſe party for not conforming to its opinions; but what proof had been adduced that they were more judicious than their own. The lenity ſo much recommended by oppoſition, when put to the teſt, by the repeal of the Stamp Act, had not been attended with any efficacy. The Americans had riſen in their demands ever ſince they found this country was diſpoſed to make conceſſions. Had they not formally declared themſelves independent, ſtill they would have thrown off all reſtraints, had they continued united to this country

country upon the footing they had propoſed, and to which oppoſition would ſo readily have agreed.

But it was neither miniſtry nor oppoſition that had any right to decide who ſhould be employed in the different departments of government: that right was veſted excluſively in the Crown. Unleſs that branch of the legiſlature had the ſupreme direction in theſe matters, the affairs of the nation would be thrown into the utmoſt confuſion, as every party would inſiſt on a preference to its own members. If oppoſition ſtill continued to reprobate the conduct of thoſe at the helm, a Parliamentary inquiry lay open; there, if they were upon examination found to have acted a cenſurable part, they would be condemned in a conſtitutional manner; but endleſs imputations of miſconduct, where from the nature of things, it was impoſſible to enſure ſucceſs, was unjuſt and ungenerous, and argued much more of factiouſneſs and perſonality, than of real concern for the public.

True it was, the events of war had not proved ſo deciſive in North America as had been reaſonably expected; but till experience had pronounced againſt the propriety of meaſures, no arguments founded on mere conjecture ſhould prevent their trial, eſpecially when approved by a great majority of ſuffrages. The voice of the nation, at the commencement of hoſtilities in America, ſeemed generally to ſpeak for coercive meaſures, as the moſt likely to bring matters to a ſpeedy concluſion: that voice had been liſtened to; reſolute and ſpirited plans had been formed in conſequence of it; the fate of war was now in ſuſpence; and as a deciſion of the conteſt by the ſword had been the choice of this country, and accepted by its Colonies, it would be unworthy of the character of this nation to be the firſt to ſhrink from an appeal made after

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ſo mature and ſolemn a deliberation, and hitherto perſevered in with ſo much conſtancy and vigour.

After one of the longeſt and moſt violent debates that ever was known in either of the Houſes, the amendment to the addreſs was rejected in the Houſe of Lords, by eighty-two votes to forty-one; and in that of Commons, by two hundred and fifty-three, to one hundred and thirty-four.

In the mean time, the affairs of Ireland began ſeriouſly to engage the public attention. The loyalty and attachment that country had ſhown to the cauſe of Great Britain, had procured it the univerſal concurrence of all claſſes, in the neceſſity of removing the grievances of which it complained.

Some oppoſition had at firſt ariſen from thoſe commercial towns, that apprehended their intereſt might ſuffer from a compliance with its requeſts; but their repreſentations were drowned in the general cry of the nation, and it was determined to do the Iriſh that juſtice which they ſo amply deſerved.

In conſequence of this determination, ſeveral acts were repealed that had proved obnoxious to the trade of that kingdom, and ſeveral branches of commerce laid open to their participation in common with the people of Great Britain.

Another ſubject of public diſcuſſion at this time was the enormity of the expences incurred for the ſupport and defence of the nation againſt its numerous enemies. It was obſerved, that never had this country been the object of ſo powerful a combination as that which was now exerting its whole ſtrength to work its ruin; but that notwithſtanding the conſequent neceſſity of employing its reſources with the utmoſt care and good management, there never had been ſo manifeſt and ſcandalous a profuſion in every department of public expence.

What rendered people the more ſolicitous on this account, was the ſolitary ſituation of this country

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in its preſent difficulties. It had not a ſingle ally, and there was no likelihood of any power on the continent of Europe eſpouſing its cauſe. The original quarrel with its Colonies ſeemed yet in the ideas of the European ſtates, to ſtand upon the ſame ground on which it had begun. They did not ſeem ſufficiently aware that the acceſſion of the Houſe of Bourbon to that quarrel had entirely changed the very nature of it; or if they did perceive the conſequences of ſuffering that family to prevail over Great Britain in the preſent conteſt, the loſs of its Colonies, which would be the worſt that could happen to this latter, would only deprive her of a proportion of ſtrength which had excited their jealouſy. She would, at all events, remain ſtrong enough, in conjunction with their aſſiſtance, if neceſſary, to repreſs the ambition of the Houſe of Bourbon.

Still, however, their jealouſy preponderated againſt their prudence. It was ſo deeply rooted, as not to permit them to look on as meer ſpectators. Inſtead of that indifference and neutrality which they all profeſſed, appearances in ſeveral of them were very unfavourable to this country, and occaſioned well-grounded ſuſpicions, that they were watching the opportunity to contribute ſtill further to the depreſſion of Great Britain, by declaring themſelves in favour of the independency aſſumed by its Colonies.

In ſuch a perilous ſituation, ſurrounded by open and concealed enemies, attacked by the whole ſtrength of France and Spain, and menaced with the indirect enmity of moſt of the other European powers, it certainly was incumbent on thoſe who preſided over the affairs of this country, to huſband its reſources with the ſtricteſt œconomy, as no relief or friendſhip were expected from any other quarter.

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The fact was, that from the noble and ſucceſsful ſtand that Britain ſtill continued to make, and from the unproſperous condition of both the French and the Spaniſh marine, Europe began to entertain great doubt whether the Houſe of Bourbon would be able to attain the point it had propoſed. In this idea, as the general wiſh went to abridge, in ſome degree, the vaſt power and influence which had been exerciſed by Great Britain, clandeſtine meaſures were in agitation in almoſt all parts of Europe, for the purpoſe of co-operating with the deſigns of the Houſe of Bourbon, till it had effected as much of the diminution of this country's greatneſs, as ſhould reduce it to that level which was the object of European politics.

This inimical diſpoſition of her neighbours, began to ſhew itſelf in a very alarming manner, and to awaken the ſolicitude of every man who was deſirous that Great Britain ſhould not be deſpoiled of its rank and conſequence. The diſcerning, as well as the ſpirited part of the nation, deemed it unqueſtionably able to go ſucceſsfully through the conflict wherein it was engaged, by a prudent and judicious employment of the force which it poſſeſſed.

Notwithſtanding the loſſes that Great Britain had undergone, her power ſtill remained ſo formidable, and her reſources were confeſſedly ſo great, that ſhe bid fair, in the opinion of all intelligent people, to come with honour out of the conteſt, provided her finances were adminiſtered with due œconomy.

In order to compaſs ſo deſirable an end, various were the ſchemes in contemplation at this time, both among the members of the miniſtry, and thoſe of the oppoſition. Among thoſe who diſtinguiſhed themſelves upon this occaſion, were the Duke of Richmond, and the Earl of Shelburne, in the Houſe

of Lords; and Mr. Burke in the Houſe of Commons.

On the ſeventh of December, a long and intereſting ſpeech was made by the Duke of Richmond on the neceſſity of practiſing the moſt rigid œconomy, as the only rational ground whereon to reſt the hope of extricating this country from its many difficulties. What he principally inſiſted on, was, that the firſt leſſon of this neceſſary virtue ſhould be taught by the Crown itſelf. An example of ſuch influence and potency, would not fail to have the moſt immediate and diffuſive effect. It would excite a univerſal imitation. No men poſſeſſed of a patrimony adequate to their rank and pretenſions, would heſitate, after ſuch a precedent, to reſign ſuch a part of the ſalaries and incomes ariſing from their public employments, as bore a proportion with that beſtowed out of the royal revenue for the exigencies of the ſtate.

The intent of this propoſal was not to leſſen the luſtre and magnificence of the Throne. The diminution of its income now propoſed, would reach no further than that addition which had latterly been made. Such a reduction would place it on the ſame footing as in the moſt ſplendid and proſperous æras, and leave it in full poſſeſſion of all that was requiſite to make a figure equal to the rank and dignity of a Britiſh monarch.

An addreſs conformable to the purpoſe of this ſpeech, was moved accordingly, and enforced by a variety of additional arguments by the other Lords on the ſame ſide of the queſtion. Much knowledge and eloquence were diſplayed in the diſcourſes made in ſupport of the motion; and a multitude of reaſons aſſigned in its recommendation.

The motives alledged by miniſtry for oppoſing this motion, were, that the Civil Liſt was a neceſſary appendage of the Crown, and could not ſuffer any dimi-

diminution without impairing its luſtre. That conſidering the value of money, it did not exceed the former revenue, which, though nominally ſmaller, was ſubſtantially as large. It would occaſion an abridgment of ſtipends and ſalaries, that would reduce many individuals to great and mortifying ſtraits: and finally, the ſum produced to the public by this retrenchment, would not prove of ſufficient conſideration to raiſe it in ſo diſtreſſing and oppreſſive a manner; which would affect people partially, without contributing to any eſſential and general benefit.

There were a multiplicity of more adviſable methods to encreaſe the national revenue, without detracting from that of the Crown, and of thoſe whom it employed in the neceſſary departments of the ſtate. Vigilance over thoſe who were appointed to the different branches of the public expenditure, and a ſtrict and rigorous inſpection into their accounts, were the proper and obvious methods of preventing needleſs expences, and obviating the waſte of money. After a long and well-ſupported debate, the motion was negatived by ſeventy-ſeven to thirty-ſix.

The encreaſing enormity of the ſums wanted for the extraordinaries of the army, was, at this time, no leſs an object of the moſt alarming nature. The moſt intelligent individuals were unable to account in what manner they could poſſibly be incurred; as particular proviſion was made for the various articles of ſtores and proviſions, tranſports and ordnance; the ſums expended in which, were accounted for in a clear and regular manner.

All parties agreed in the indiſpenſible neceſſity of putting an immediate ſtop to this career of profuſion. The Earl of Shelburne undertook, in the Houſe of Lords, to lay before them a detail of the

immenſe expenditure that had lately taken place in in this department.

The diſcuſſion of this important ſubject, opened a wide field to his abilities, and afforded him a well-timed opportunity of comparing together the extraordinaries of paſt and preſent times. He ſtated a variety of facts to ſhew the prodigious difference between the ſums expended in this, and thoſe that were found ſufficient in former wars. He obſerved, that at the time of the Revolutoin, when a large army was maintained in Flanders, another in Ireland, and expeditions were carried on in the Weſt Indies, the yearly extraordinaries for military ſervices never amounted to more than one hundred thouſand pounds. In that extenſive and glorious war, which was waged at the opening of this century, on account of the ſucceſſion to the Crown of Spain, notwithſtanding the numerous armies that were employed in Germany, Flanders, and Spain, and the enterprizes that were carried on in the Mediterranean, the Weſt Indies, and North America, the annual extraordinaries of the army required at no time more than two hundred thouſand pounds.

In the war which commenced with Spain in the year thirty nine, and was carried on againſt that kingdom and France in many parts of the world, notwithſtanding the multitude and importance of the various operations which took place at that period, wherein a dangerous rebellion broke out in the heart of the kingdom, the ſum of four hundred thouſand pounds was the higheſt demand in any year for extraordinaries.

In the laſt triumphant war, when every quarter of the globe became the ſcene of action, the higheſt expences for extraordinaries were incurred in the year ſixty-two. Britain had then an army of eighty thouſand men in Germany, another very numerous in North America, others in the Weſt and Eaſt Indies,

dies, in Portugal, and on the coaſts of France. The extraordinaries of the whole were defrayed with two millions. But the extraordinaries of the preſent war, during the two laſt years, ſeventy-eight and ſeventy-nine, would be found, when added together, to amount to ſix millions.

The principal cauſe which he aſſigned for this amazing diſproportion between the extraordinaries of former times, and thoſe of the preſent, was,—That miniſters employed fewer perſons in this department, and allowed them leſs profits. During the laſt war one contractor only ſupplied all the forces in America; and his agreement was to furniſh proviſions on that very ſpot at ſixpence a ration. But the preſent contract was divided between a dozen miniſterial men, who, inſtead of tranſporting ſupplies to America at their own coſt, as had been the practice, were only bound to deliver them at Cork, notwithſtanding they received the ſame price. Thus the public was charged with all the expences attending the voyage, contrary to cuſtom; in conſequence of which every ration, in lieu of ſix-pence, coſt the government two ſhillings.

He took ſevere notice, that one perſon only had, in the ſpace of two years, enjoyed contracts to the amount of thirteen hundred thouſand pounds.—Three millions ſeven hundred thouſand pounds, in ſpecie, had paſſed through the hands of another contractor, to be tranſmitted to America; but no voucher had appeared for this immenſe ſum: its accounts were contained in thirty or forty lines; twenty thouſand in one—thirty or forty thouſand in another. Such was the method of authenticating this vaſt expenditure.

He obſerved, that the influence acquired by miniſtry through this arrangement, was enormous, and unconſtitutional in the moſt alarming degree;

it afforded miniſters the dangerous opportunity of laying out the national treaſure at their own diſcretion, and without any check. Hence flowed the ſums expended in venality and corruption. Want of account produced want of œconomy; and the public money was laviſhed for unwarrantable and diſgraceful purpoſes.

In conſequence of theſe various repreſentations, he moved, That the expenditure of thoſe vaſt ſums, annually ſunk in extraordinaries, ſhould immediately be brought under controul; and that to extend the public expences beyond the ſums granted by Parliament, was an invaſion of its peculiar and excluſive rights.

The reply to theſe charges was, that no diſhonourable imputations could be laid to the character of the Lord who preſided over the Treaſury. His diſintereſtedneſs was ſuch, that were he to leave his office, it would be found that it had not enriched him. Every article of national expence was ſufficiently ſubject to examination and controul at the Exchequer. Such an enquiry as that now propoſed, was of a dangerous tendency, by bringing ſuch matters to light, as ought, from their nature, to remain concealed. Without placing a great degree of confidence in thoſe agents of government whoſe characters were reputable, many objects muſt be neglected that were not otherwiſe attainable. Commanders of armies, eſpecially, ought to be largely truſted. So much depended on their management of opportunities that were and could be known only to themſelves, that to ſtint their demands on ſuch occaſions, would limit their powers and abilities of acting in a degree that would neceſſarily prove highly injurious to the public ſervice.

Upon theſe grounds, the motion made by the Earl of Shelburne was rejected by a majority of eighty-one votes, againſt forty-one.

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After being defeated in this firſt motion, he made a ſecond; the purport of which was, to conſider of the appointment of a committee to enquire into the different branches of expenditure, and to conſider how far they might be reduced, and how much could annually be ſaved of the national income. He was more fortunate in this propoſal, which was readily aſſented to.

The attention of the Houſe of Commons was taken up at this time, by that plan of œconomy and reform which was propoſed by Mr. Burke. He gave notice of his intention to bring it ſhortly before the Houſe, as a buſineſs which it was become indiſpenſible to take into the moſt ſerious conſideration. He repreſented that a reformation of the numberleſs abuſes of which people complained in in ſo loud and acrimonious a manner, was a duty they owed to their conſtituents; and which if they refuſed to perform, it was much to be apprehended the nation might, in the height of its diſſatisfaction, take it out of their hands, and bring it to completion without waiting for their intervention.

The intention of Mr. Burke was warmly applauded and ſeconded by the members of oppoſition; but ſome of them did not ſcruple to declare their apprehenſions that his plan would be rejected, and that there was not virtue enough in the repreſentative body, to admit of any propoſal tending to deſtroy that ſyſtem of corrupt ſubſerviency to miniſterial views, which occaſioned the preſent diſtreſſes of this country.

Mr. Fox ſupported the deſign of Mr. Burke with extraordinary force of thought and language. He repreſented, with peculiar energy, the univerſal expectation of all ranks and all parties, that ſome effectual means ſhould be employed to put a ſtop to that prodigality which would, if not checked at this critical period, occaſion the ſpeedy downfall of the ſtate.

But his opinion was, that ſo great was the averſeneſs of a parliamentary majority to the reformations intended, that nothing but inevitable neceſſity would produce its conſent This neceſſity, however, was daily becoming more preſſing, and would compel what wiſdom could not perſuade. It would inſpire the public with a determination to inſiſt upon a due correction of abuſes; and were the public to be reſolute in its demands, all oppoſition to them would be vain.

He added a variety of other arguments to enforce the ſcheme of reformation; and was ably aſſiſted by other members of the ſame opinion. But what was advanced upon this ſubject, did not ſeem to make that impreſſion upon the other ſide which was aimed at.

When the annual eſtimates were laid before the Houſe, they revived the debates about the propriety of a reform. Cenſorious notice was taken that thoſe relating to the Ordnance amounted to one million fifty thouſand pounds; exceeding thoſe of the preceding year by one hundred and thirty thouſand. The unuſual and unexpected increaſe of expence in theſe and the other departments, excited ſtrong animadverſions on the part of oppoſition, and occaſioned a multitude of ſevere reflections on ſome of the principal perſons in adminiſtration.

Theſe warm diſcuſſions within doors, created numberleſs others without. The clamours for reformation became general; and were the more violent, as it was greatly ſuſpected that the majority in Parliament were averſe to it, and would oppoſe it with all their might, whenever propoſed. This perſuaſion generated much diſcontent throughout the realm, and expoſed the miniſterial party to much ſlander and defamation among thoſe who were ſanguine for this meaſure, and who conſtituted the moſt numerous part of the nation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVIII.

Meetings and Aſſociations in England.—Petitions to Parliament.—Proceedings and Debates in that Aſſembly.

1780.

DURING the courſe of the preceding ſummer, the people of England began to look with great ſuſpicion and jealouſy on the conduct of moſt of their repreſentatives: they complained, with great freedom and latitude of thought and expreſſion, of the influence which was exerted by miniſtry in Parliament, and of the prodigious increaſe of that influence within a few years.

Sentiments of this kind were adopted by numbers of individuals poſſeſſing great weight and conſequence, and ſoon ſpread with amazing rapidity over the nation. They became, as uſual in ſuch caſes, the general topics of converſation; and were eſpouſed with uncommon warmth by a large proportion of the people.

From the continual diſcuſſions to which they gave riſe, bold and animated ideas were often vented on the cauſes to which this influence was attributed, and on the remedies that were neceſſary to ſtop its progreſs.

Many of thoſe daring and reſolute individuals with which this nation abounds, were openly of opinion that nothing would prevent it ſhort of a change in the conſtitution of Parliament. In its preſent form it would always remain under the controul of miniſtry. Experience had ſhewn that all the barriers which had been ſet up to preſerve its

independence upon adminiſtration, had proved ineffectual.

The only method remaining to compaſs this end, ſeemed, in the apprehenſions of the majority, to be an abridgment of the duration of Parliament, and a fair repreſentation of the people. They could not, with any colour of truth, be ſaid to poſſeſs that juſt and equal ſhare in the choice of their repreſentatives, to which they were entitled by the conſtitution; and without which it was abſurd to affirm that they enjoyed the rights of freemen, the moſt eſſential of which conſiſted in electing thoſe who were to govern and make laws for them.

Since the meeting of Parliament theſe principles and notions had acquired the more ſtrength, as the backwardneſs of moſt of its members to concur in the general deſire of the nation, appeared more confirmed and deciſive. It was expected that the City of London, as the capital, and hitherto foremoſt in aſſerting the public cauſe, would have led the way upon this occaſion. But the county of York firſt ſet the example to the reſt of the kingdom.

A numerous meeting of the principal perſons in
Dec. 30, that rich and large county, was held at
1779. York, where a petition to Parliament was framed with the utmoſt unanimity, and a committee of ſixty-one gentlemen choſen, to manage the correſpondence that would be neceſſary for the carrying on the deſign in agitation, and to draw up a form of aſſociation in order to ſupport and promote it.

The petition ſtated that the nation was involved in a dangerous and expenſive war; in conſequence of which, together with the defection of its Colonies, and their preſent confederacy with France, the national debt was greatly increaſed, taxes heavily augmented and the trade and manufactures of the kingdom much affected. It complained, that notwithſtanding

ſtanding the frugality ſo peculiarly neceſſary in the preſent circumſtances, the money of the nation was laviſhed with unbounded profuſion, and that an influence had been thereby eſtabliſhed, which, if not timely reſiſted, would deſtroy the conſtitution of this country. It requeſted Parliament, previous to the raiſing of any further taxes, to inquire into, and correct the abuſes in the expenditure of public money; to reduce all exorbitant emoluments; to aboliſh all ſinecure places and unmerited penſions, and to appropriate the produce to the exigencies of the ſtate.

So earneſt and diffuſed among all claſſes, was the ſpirit that produced this petition, that no leſs than fourteen clergymen were of the committee appointed to form a plan of aſſociation, and to carry on the correſpondence for that purpoſe with the other counties.

The example of the county of York rouſed, in a manner, the whole kingdom. Middleſex framed a petition and aſſociation on the ſame model, and was ſhortly followed by twenty-ſeven of the principal counties, and moſt of the conſiderable towns in England.

In the ſeveral meetings held for this purpoſe, both Adminiſtration and Parliament were treated with unreſtrained ſeverity of cenſure and reprobation. No language was thought too opprobrious: they were deſcribed as an aſſemblage of individuals void of all principle, devoted to the moſt ſlaviſh influence, poſſeſſing no will of their own, and ready to ſacrifice their conſcience and reputation to the moſt ignominious dictates of people in power; loſt, in ſhort, to all generous ſentiments and feelings, and bound by no ties but thoſe of the meaneſt and moſt ſordid intereſt.

Never, indeed, had Great Britain, ſince the civil wars in the laſt century, experienced ſo much animoſity and diviſion among its inhabitants. Confidence

dence in government, that central pillar of all public proſperity, was utterly vaniſhed, and no reſpect or eſteem for their repreſentatives remained among the majority of the people. They conſidered them as men whoſe only aim was to enrich themſelves at the public expence, and to whom the glory or the intereſt of the realm were matters of no conſideration. The Court was viewed as the receptacle of all that harboured ſiniſter deſigns againſt this country; and where no man ſtood any chance of advancing himſelf that durſt avow any maxims but thoſe of obſequiouſneſs and ſervility.

What powerfully contributed to theſe unfavourable notions of the court and government, among the people of this country, was the baſe opinion entertained and propagated by the Americans and their adherents, of thoſe who preſided over the affairs of Britain. The public prints at Boſton and Philadelphia, the latter place eſpecially, were full of invectives againſt the court and miniſtry of this kingdom. Animated by the ſucceſs with which the declaration of independence had been maintained, and emboldened by that republican ſpirit which is always the moſt ungovernable at its firſt outſet, they knew no bounds to the reproaches and defamations with which they loaded the leading individuals of a ſtate, by which they deemed themſelves injuriouſly treated; and they repreſented them accordingly in the moſt opprobrious colours.

This vindictive ſpirit hurried them frequently into unjuſtifiable exceſſes. Scurrility and licentiouſneſs of ſtile often diſgraced their productions, and took away that ſting and poignancy from them, which they were unadviſedly meant to enforce.

Such individuals in England as had eſpouſed their cauſe, came gradually at laſt to adopt their notions. Hence thoſe violent declamations againſt the ruling powers; and thoſe deſcriptions of their actions

actions and character, that were marked with ſo much rancour and outrageouſneſs; and that involved in one common reprobation every man who approved of the meaſures of miniſtry, without reflecting that conviction of their rectitude might influence thoſe who ſupported, no leſs than thoſe who oppoſed them.

The multitudes that condemned, in this indiſcriminate manner, the conduct of thoſe at the helm, did not perceive the danger of carrying matters to thoſe extremities which muſt enſue, were they to make good the determinations they ſeemed to have taken in order to force a compliance with their demands. They did not appear to be aware that this flame of diſcontent and diſſention now raging throughout the kingdom, was in no little meaſure owing to the ſecret machinations of the foes to this country. Theſe were fully perſuaded, that ſhould unanimity prevail, and confidence in government, Britain would riſe ſuperior to all their efforts. In this perſuaſion their numerous emiſſaries were employed in ſpreading animoſity and diſcord, and incenſing the nation at large againſt thoſe who had the management of its affairs.

In this ſtate of general confuſion, the minds of men were too much agitated coolly to attend to the conſequences of thoſe internal commotions, into which they were ſo ready to plunge themſelves. They did not ſufficiently conſider that the violent ſpirit which was raiſed throughout the nation, was in part the work of its enemies; and that even allowing its object to be proper and lawful, it could not be compaſſed through the means that were by too many ſuggeſted, without throwing the realm into convulſions, and expoſing it to the mercy of the formidable powers with which it was at war.

The generoſity of diſpoſition that characteriſes this nation, had inclined numbers not only to think favour-

favourably of the American cauſe, but to give their warmeſt wiſhes to thoſe who ſupported it: there were many who did not ſcruple openly to expreſs their moſt fervent hopes that the Britiſh arms would be foiled, and the Americans prove victorious.

While the conteſt lay ſolely between Great Britain and America, ſuch ideas might perhaps have been excuſable; though certainly not reconcilable to ſtrict patriotiſm. But when the Colonies had caſt off their connection with this country, and allied themſelves with its moſt dangerous enemies, ſo manifeſt a declaration of enmity cancelled at once all the ties of friendſhip that had formerly ſubſiſted. Whichever of the two was in fault, the parent ſtate or its dependencies, they were now become two ſeperate powers; good policy therefore required every Britiſh ſubject to view America in the light of an enemy, however he might have thought himſelf authoriſed to favour her pretenſions, previouſly to the diſſolution of that union which had rendered them both but one ſtate.

In addition to this motive, there was another of equal, if not ſtill greater weight; the affections of the Americans were totally eſtranged from this country and its inhabitants. Without enquiring whether the Americans were well-founded in adopting thoſe rancorous ſentiments wherein their publications abounded, it may be ſufficient to obſerve, that their former attachment to the people of this country, was now converted into a moſt violent hatred. As much as before this unhappy conteſt, they were wont to delight in the praiſes of England and its inhabitants; they now manifeſted a readineſs to find blemiſhes and reaſons for cenſure in both. The manners and character of the Engliſh, their abilities and genius, were all ſtudiouſly depreciated, and thoſe of other nations repreſented as much preferable.

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Moſt of thoſe illiberal aſperſions were dealt out in periodical publications, in order to inflame the reſentment of the commonalty, and excite their indignation againſt the ſuperiority claimed by Britain over America. Far from regretting the ſeparation of the two countries, their political writers exerted their utmoſt ingenuity in repreſenting it as the moſt auſpicious event that could have happened to the Colonies.

They aſſerted, that had the union ſubſiſted between them, the conſequences would have proved highly derimental to America, both in a moral and a political light. The force of ancient attachments and prejudices in favour of England, would gradually have occaſioned a conformity with her in every reſpect. From the aſcendancy which cuſtom had ſo long ſecured to the parent ſtate; the vices of the Engliſh nation, and the many flaws and defects of its various inſtitutions would have been adopted. In ſhort, a coalition would have been formed of Engliſh and American habits and ideas, extremely prejudicial to the latter.

For theſe reaſons they were even of opinion, that the total rupture with Great Britain, and the alliance concluded with France, were much more advantageous to America, than a recognition of its independence, accompanied with an immediate reconciliation with the former.

Notwithſtanding the acknowledgment of independence, the preponderance of old maxims would have continued to influence the people of America. The remembrance of their origin, and the kind treatment which policy would have dictated on the part of England, would ſoon have obliterated the memory of paſt feuds. By degrees an intimacy would have returned, and the Engliſh and Americans would again have become the ſame people in ſentiments and affections, however their governments might differ.

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Were such a re-union ever to happen, the probable consequences would be, that the Americans would imperceptibly slide into an imitation of a people whom they could hardly avoid considering as their model. In process of time, they *might* be induced to slight and abandon the constitutions they had now formed, and establish others more conformable to that of England. Their morals would no less be tainted by this approximation.

Both of these were evils against which the Americans could not guard with too much circumspection. The government of Britain, however perfect in appearance and theory, was no desirable object to those who knew how corrupt it was in *practice*: and the manners and ways of living of its inhabitants could not be recommended, as worthy of being copied by such as were acquainted with the extravagance and excesses of individuals; the *pride* and luxury of the great, and the profusion and irregularity that reigned among all classes.

It was no longer, therefore, among the English, the Americans were to seek for patterns of either public or private virtue. The simplicity of a republic, ill accorded with the affected splendour of a monarchy; and American plainness would certainly suffer a contamination from the pretended refinements of the English in their various modes of enjoying life. From imitating them in points of smaller importance, they would at last follow their example in matters of moment, and habituate themselves to that laxity of domestic morals, and that system of corruption in affairs of state, which now infected all orders of men in England with so little exception. Such were the ideas of many persons in the Colonies.

These inconveniences would not, in their apprehensions, result from the alliance the Americans had formed with France. Born and educated in a country, of which the government, religion, laws,

laws, maxims, and manners were diametrically oppoſite to thoſe of the French, the antipathy and prejudice early imbibed againſt theſe, would effectually prevent them from ever obtaining any footing among the Americans. The only connection between them and the French, would be that of two nations united merely for their political ſupport, and influenced by no other conſideration but the neceſſity of reciprocal aſſiſtance, excluſive of all thoſe motives ariſing from conſanguinity and perſonal attachments.

Theſe and many other arguments were adduced by the Americans in favour of an alliance with France, preferably to one with Great Britain. They ſeemed, in ſhort, to have transferred all their future hopes and views to that country and nation; and to have bidden, as it were, an everlaſting farewell to the land and people from whence they originated.

Such being the diſpoſitions of the Americans towards Britain, and their opinion of its inhabitants, it no longer became theſe to harbour thoſe friendly ſentiments in their behalf, to which they were formerly entitled. The utmoſt they had a right to expect in the judgment of the impartial world, was to be placed on a footing of equality with other ſtates, until they manifeſted a willingneſs to renew the ancient amity with their parent country.

In the mean time, the antipathy of the Americans to miniſtry and its adherents, had, by means of their publications and their partiſans, gained extenſive ground in England: its many ſecret foes were indefatigable in their endeavours to ſow the ſeeds of diſſention, and to increaſe the animoſity of all parties.

It was therefore with the utmoſt keenneſs and activity, they ſeized this opportunity of the general diſcontent and alarm at the ſtate and management of

the public finances, to inflame the minds of the people, already ſufficiently exaſperated at the enormity of the ſums annually levied and expended by the preſent adminiſtration.

In this heat and violence of temper, the nation was ſummoned to thoſe meetings that have been mentioned. Happily as thoſe who conducted them were perſons of rank and character, it was with great ſatisfaction perceived by people of moderation and diſcernment, that the machinations of the emiſſaries of France and America, would be fruſtrated, and that the utmoſt they would be able to effect, would terminate in clamours and invectives.

On the eighth day of February, Sir George Saville, one of the Members for the county of York, preſented to Parliament the petition of his conſtituents. Though in a weak ſtate of health, he exerted himſelf upon this occaſion with uncommon vigour; and was attended to with that reſpect and attention which were due to a man of his eminent worth and unſuſpected patriotiſm.

The ſpeech he made was remarkably pointed and animated. He obſerved, that the petition he laid before the Houſe, was the unanimous reſult of a moſt reſpectable and numerous meeting: Thoſe who compoſed it were men poſſeſſed of no leſs property than was contained in the Houſe to whom their petition was now preſented. This was a circumſtance that merited ſerious conſideration. Neither had the petitioners exceeded therein the bounds of the ſtricteſt decency: the petition was conceived in temperate language, and abſtained from all perſonality. It went ſingly to the point univerſally complained of, the prodigious expenditure of the public money, and the abuſes with which it was accompanied; and it requeſted the Houſe to put a ſtop to them.

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A requeſt of this nature was ſo reaſonable and conſtitutional, that it could not in equity be refuſed. But ſhould miniſters reject it, he left it to them to conjecture the conſequences. It came from the largeſt and moſt populous county in the kingdom, fully ſenſible of its propriety, and earneſtly bent upon obtaining a remedy to the evils of which the preſſure was felt ſo heavily.

He then addreſſed the miniſter with great firmneſs; preſſing him to declare, whether he meant to be a friend or a foe to the petition. He concluded by telling him the petition was ſubſcribed by more than eight thouſand freeholders; and laying upon the table a liſt of the gentlemen's names, of whom the meeting conſiſted, aſſured him that in whatever manner the Houſe might diſpoſe of the petition, they who had framed it, were determined to abide by it; and had to that intent appointed a committee of correſpondence with the committees of the other counties.

This petition was ſeconded by Mr. Fox in one of the moſt animated and eloquent diſcourſes that ever had been pronounced in the Houſe. The miniſterial anſwer on the other ſide, was firm and reſolute: it inſiſted on the neceſſity of proceeding, previouſly to all other buſineſs, to that of ways and means to raiſe the ſupplies that had been granted for the indiſpenſible ſervice of the kingdom in its preſent perilous circumſtances.

The petition from the county of York was followed by thoſe from other counties, and by another from the proprietors of eſtates in Jamaica, and the principal merchants concerned in that trade. This latter petition was drawn up in a bold and maſterly ſtile. It conveyed remonſtrances and complaints of the heavieſt nature, and charged miniſtry with the moſt inexcuſable neglect of the iſland of Jamaica; of which it repreſented the worth and importance

to this country in a clear and forcible manner. The purport of this petition was to ſhew the danger that iſland was in, and the likelihood of the enemy attacking and taking it, unleſs it were put in a better ſtate of defence.

On the eleventh of February, Mr. Burke brought forward the plan he had formed to ſecure the Independence of Parliament, and to introduce œconomy into the various departments of government.

The ſpeech he made on this occaſion, was replete with the moſt extenſive and accurate knowledge of the ſubjects of which it treated. He laid the propoſals before the Houſe with a perſpicuity and an eloquence that commanded the attention, and even the applauſe of thoſe whom his ſyſtem would moſt affect. It was allowed by all parties, that he had acquitted himſelf in the arduous buſineſs he had undertaken, in the moſt maſterly and complete manner.

The principle on which he founded his ſyſtem, was to remove the cauſes of corrupt influence, by leſſening the power of thoſe from whom it proceeded. In order to accompliſh this point, a number of lucrative, but unneceſſary and uſeleſs employments and places in their gift, were to be aboliſhed, and the unreaſonable emoluments of others abridged. By theſe means, no leſs, upon a ſtrict computation, than fifty votes in Parliament would become independent, through the abolition of thoſe places which were held under miniſtry; and an addition of two hundred thouſand pounds would accrue to the revenue.

The reformation he propoſed was principally aimed at thoſe offices that were liable to frequent changes of incumbents. Thoſe of which the poſſeſſion was of a permanent nature, and the poſſeſſors had no other means of ſubſiſtence, would be placed on ſuch a footing, as to prevent individuals from

from receiving any perſonal injury. All official and uſeful employments were to retain their uſual ſalaries and perquiſites.

An ample fund was to remain to the Crown for the requiſite ſupport of its dignity and grandeur, and for the remuneration of thoſe who deſerved well of the ſtate by their merit or ſervices.

He obſerved that an exorbitant ſhare of influence was highly pernicious to government. In proportion as that influence had riſen of late, the authority of government, and the reſpect due to it were no leſs viſibly diminiſhed. The ſtrength of government ſhould go no further than the due performance of its functions: all that went beyond that line, tended indeed to render miniſters powerful; but not to make them ſerviceable to the public.

The plan of this intended reformation was compriſed in five ſeparate bills. The firſt regulated the civil eſtabliſhment of the Crown, limited the ſum appropriated to penſions, ſuppreſſed needleſs offices, and applied the money produced by theſe ſavings to the uſe of the public. The ſecond ordained the ſale of the foreſts, the lands, and other poſſeſſions hitherto appertaining to the Crown. The third united the Principality of Wales, and the county of Cheſter, to the ſame kind of ſubjection to the Crown as the other parts of the kingdom, by aboliſhing the courts and offices peculiar to them, and placing them altogether on the ſame footing as the other counties. The fourth made the ſame proviſion for the Dutchy of Lancaſter, as the fifth did for the Dutchy of Cornwall. The ſavings ariſing from theſe alterations were, as in the firſt inſtance, to be applied to the ſervice of the public.

The offices to be aboliſhed by this reformation, were the Treaſurer, Comptroller, and Cofferer of the Houſhold, the Treaſurer of the Chamber, the

Maſter of the Houſhold, the Board of Greencloth, and many places under the Steward of the Houſhold; the great and removing Wardrobe, the Jewel Office, the Robes, the Board of Works, and the Civil branch of the Board of Ordnance. The offices of Treaſurer of the Navy, and Paymaſter of the Army, were no longer to remain on the footing of banks; the money formerly depoſited with them, was henceforth to be lodged in the Bank of England, to which alſo the buſineſs of the Mint was to be transferred, the manufacturing part only excepted. The office of Paymaſter of the Penſions was alſo to be ſuppreſſed, and they were hereafter to he paid at the Exchequer. A reduction was to be made of the great patent places in the Exchequer to fixed ſalaries, after the demiſe of their preſent poſſeſſors, and thoſe who had reverſions upon them. The other offices to be aboliſhed, were the Board of Trade, that of Third Secretary of State, and thoſe of Maſters of the various ſorts of hounds. The preſent liſt of penſioners to remain; but to determine with their lives; after which the ſum for penſions was to be limited to ſixty thouſand pounds a year.

This plan was accompanied with ſeveral regulations for the due and orderly payment of all perſons in office or employment, according to their reſpective neceſſities, and the importance of their employments. On the firſt liſt of payment were the Judges: on the ſecond, Miniſters to foreign Courts; on the third, the King's Tradeſmen: on the fourth, his Domeſtic Servants, and all perſons whoſe ſalaries did not exceed two hundred pounds a year: on the fifth, the yearly allowances to perſonages of the royal family, including the privy purſe: on the ſixth, individuals whoſe ſalaries exceeded two hundred pounds a year: on the ſeventh, the Penſion Liſt: on the eighth, the poſts of Honour

nour about the King's perſon: on the ninth, the Lords of the Treaſury.

The ſpeech and propoſals of Mr. Burke were received by the miniſter with great candour and liberality of ſentiment. He acknowledged the ingenuity and judiciouſneſs of the plan, and the great propriety of introducing the propoſed œconomy and reformation in the various departments of the ſtate. The motion for bringing in the bills, paſſed accordingly, without any oppoſition.

Great were the expectations entertained by the public at large on the hearing of the favourable reception of the ſcheme offered by Mr. Burke. The high opinion entertained by all parties of that gentleman's abilities, rendered them confident that were he permitted to bring his deſign to full completion, an effectual chek would be given to that influence of which the magnitude appeared ſo alarming to the generality of people.

The ſum that might be produced for the public ſervice by the reductions of exorbitant ſalaries, and the abolition of needleſs offices, was not the principal object that people had in view. However conſiderable it was expected to prove, it bore no proportion of importance, in the minds of men, when compared with the ſatisfaction that would be felt, on ſeeing the parliamentary power of miniſters reduced, and the repreſentative body of the nation placed in a ſtate of real independence.

On the ſame day that Mr. Burke brought his plan of reformation into the Houſe of Commons, another to the ſame purport was introduced by the Earl of Shelburne into the Houſe of Lords. He moved, in addition, that a committee ſhould be appointed, to conſiſt of members ſelected out of both Houſes, none of whom ſhould be poſſeſſed of places or penſions, in order to examine the public expences, and the

method of accounting for them, particularly the buſineſs of contracts.

He ſupported his motion with great powers of argument, and with an extenſive diſplay of knowledge and information. He complained that unconſtitutional influence had uſurped the place of conſtitutional power. This, he avowed in terms of great warmth, it was his aim to annihilate; but this would be impracticable, while twenty millions, the preſent amount of the annual expenditure, were left to the ſole and uncontrouled diſpoſal of a profuſe miniſtry.

He went largely into the meaſures adopted of late years in proof of the baneful conſequences of that influence. He aſcribed to its overbearing weight, the whole ſeries of difficulties into which the nation had been led. He entered into a deep and ſevere inveſtigation of the manner in which the debts of the nation had increaſed to their preſent enormity.

He confirmed the propriety of the examination he propoſed, by recurring to the precedents of that kind in the two reigns ſucceſſive to the Revolution, which had been productive of much utility to the public, by detecting abuſes, and puniſhing thoſe who were guilty of corrupt practices.

The Earl of Shelburne's motion was vigorouſly ſeconded by other Lords. After adducing ſeveral facts in confirmation of what had been laid before the Houſe, it was aſſerted as a concluſive argument in its favour, that a large majority of people of all parties demanded an immediate reformation of government, as the only means remaining to preſerve this country from certain and approaching ruin.

The motives aſſigned by adminiſtration for oppoſing the motion, were, the inutility of coming to any reſolution in that Houſe which was to be binding on the other, and the conſtitutional incompetency of the Houſe of Peers to interfere in any buſineſs relating to the grant or expenditure of money,

ney, which belonged exclusively to the House of Commons. The examination of public accounts, in the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, was represented as a measure that had proved ineffectual, and for that reason had been discontinued on the accession of the present royal family. It was also insisted, that no additional laws were necessary to punish pecuniary transgressions, as those in being were, and had been, experimentally found fully adequate to that purpose.

That part of the motion which excluded placemen and pensioners from the committee of examination, was highly resented by the Lords on the side of administration. By some it was construed as a libel upon them, as it insinuated that such of them as were in office, could not be trusted for a conscientious delivery of their opinions on a subject of the highest importance to their country.

But that which seemed to give the highest displeasure and offence to the Lords in the interest of ministry, was the argument drawn from that spirit of dissatisfaction and complaint which had given rise to the meetings and associations in the counties, and to the petitions that had been presented to Parliament in terms of so much freedom.

These meetings, together with their proceedings, were condemned as the offspring of faction, and the forerunners of rebellion. They tended to throw the realm into confusion by calumniating government, and leading men to cast aside that respect and deference for their rulers which are the necessary bonds of society.

The motion now before them was represented as designed to co-operate with those proceedings. It originated from the same fund of factiousness, and was calculated to embarrass ministry, and to render it odious, by making such proposals, as being impracticable, and therefore inadmissible, would of course

courſe be rejected. Theſe propoſals correſponding with the petitions framed by theſe meetings, it was eaſy to perceive that the rejection of them would add freſh fuel to the flame that had been kindled, and enable their abettors to hold out thoſe who had oppoſed them to popular malevolence, and to perplex by ſuch means the meaſures of adminiſtration.

The objections to the motion on account of its inefficacy to bind the other Houſe, was treated as deſtitute of weight. All ſuch pretexts and cavils might be removed by omitting the mention of either of the two Houſes; and the matter was of too ſerious a conſequence to deſiſt from it on account of meer forms.

The incompetency of the Houſe of Lords to interfere in money matters, was an obſtacle of no moment: a conference with the Houſe of Commons would ſettle that point with facility. But without having recourſe to this, there were precedents to ſhew that the Houſe of Peers enjoyed, and had exerciſed the right of examination into the public expences.

The reſentment ſo warmly expreſſed for the excluſion of placemen and penſioners, was anſwered by obſerving that this excluſion was perfectly conformable to the conſtitution and the laws of this country; which allowed no individuals to determine upon queſtions wherein they were ſuppoſed to be perſonally intereſted, or liable to be biaſſed.

The reprobation of the county meetings was taken up with great warmth by the Lords in oppoſition. They denied, in the moſt explicit and contradictory terms, whatever had been thrown out to their diſadvantage. The Marquis of Rockingham, in particular, ſpoke with much firmneſs and animation upon this ſubject. He aſſerted the meeting of York to have been the very reverſe of factious. It conſiſted of perſons of all parties, convinced of the immediate

mediate neceſſity of the reform for which they petitioned.

It was obſerved, at the ſame time, that the petitioners in the Engliſh counties had diſplayed no ſigns of that rebellious ſpirit which was imputed to them. They came to theſe meetings unarmed; they made no threats; they acted ſtrictly according to the letter of the conſtitution; yet they were wantonly charged with inſidious deſigns, and with unwarrantable practices. But thoſe who indulged themſelves in ſuch indecent repreſentations of the actions and intentions of men of rank, character, and property, ought to conſider that by treating them ſo diſreſpectfully and ſo injuriouſly, they were labouring to provoke them to thoſe exceſſes, of which they were determined on their firſt coming together, to remain clearly innocent; but which ill uſage, and contumelious language had a natural tendency to extort even from the moſt moderate and forbearing.

But who were theſe men whom miniſtry took ſuch pains to deſcribe as malicious and contemptible? They were gentlemen of birth, education, and fortune; as much converſant in liberal knowledge, and as well acquainted with the world as thoſe who aſperſed them in this unjuſtifiable manner. Title and the privilege of ſitting within thoſe walls excepted, there was no diſparity between the revilers and the reviled. Was it then conſiſtent with equity or with common manners, to load perſons of this deſcription with ſuch defamatory epithets, as were ſo promiſcuouſly beſtowed upon thoſe who compoſed the meetings in the different counties?

Miniſtry ought to bear in mind, that it was preciſely by ſuch an opprobrious treatment of the character of the Coloniſts, that they drove them to that inſurrection againſt this country, which had

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at laſt terminated in hoſtilities and independence. Did miniſters imagine that Engliſhmen had leſs ſpirit than the Americans, and were not as capable, on provocation, to make thoſe repent who durſt offer them improper uſage?

Some members of the oppoſition went ſo far as to tell adminiſtration, that they rejoiced to ſee ſo free and bold a ſpirit reviving in this country. It was that true Engliſh ſpirit which had, on ſo many occaſions, defeated the deſigns of wicked miniſters, and fruſtrated the attempts againſt its liberties. It was a noble ſpirit; and inſtead of being condemned and diſcouraged, it deſerved to be cheriſhed. None would wiſh it to ſubſide, but ſuch as had reaſon to apprehend its reſentment for their guilt or miſconduct. Every true Engliſhman would congratulate his countryman on its re-appearance among them; and would be heartily aggrieved ſhould miniſterial artifices effect its decline.

After a debate carried on with a violence and pointedneſs on each ſide, that knew very little bounds, and wherein much eloquence and argument were diſplayed by both parties, the Earl of Shelburne's motion was rejected upon a diviſion, by a majority of one hundred and one, to fifty-five.

This was the ſtrongeſt minority that had appeared in the Houſe of Lords for many years. It proved very alarming to miniſtry; as it ſhewed that a ſpirit of defection had gone forth, which threatened, from its late increaſe, to riſe in no long time to ſuch a height, as would effectually put a ſtop to that influence of which the complaint was ſo general.

The rejection of Lord Shelburne's motion occaſioned a remarkable proteſt. It was conceived in the moſt expreſſive and forcible language. Among other particulars, it firmly denied any intention to diminiſh the conſtitutional power of the Crown.—"This power," the proteſtors ſaid, "we are no

"leſs

" leſs ſolicitous to preſerve, than we are to annihilate
" its unconſtitutional influence. The prerogative
" rightly underſtood, not touched or intended to
" be touched by this motion, will ſupport the
" Crown in all the ſplendour which the King's
" perſonal dignity requires, and with all the autho-
" rity and vigour neceſſary to give due effect to the
" executive powers of government."

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIX.

Parliamentary Proceedings.

1780.

THE motion made by the Earl of Shelburne, the plan propoſed by Mr. Burke, and the county petitions, were looked upon as the moſt remarkable events produced in Parliament by the American war. Their tendency being of ſuch a nature, that had they ſucceeded in the manner intended, they would have wrought an eſſential revolution in the modes of adminiſtering the affairs of government.

On the eighth of March, the Houſe of Commons went into a committee on that bill in Mr. Burke's plan, which related to the civil eſtabliſhment of the Crown. The firſt queſtion agitated, was the propriety of aboliſhing the office of Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The objections to its abolition, were its real utility and efficiency: it was attended with no unreaſonable ſalaries or profits, and produced little influence in Parliament. Theſe aſſertions could not be invalidated by any proofs to the contrary; a meer denial of them carried no weight.

A third Secretary of State had been known in this kingdom in paſt ages, and was no novelty in the preſent, nor even ſo lately as during the laſt reign. It could not therefore be conſidered as a new office, but as an old one revived.

But excluſive of theſe two objections, another ſubſiſted of much greater ſtrength. The abolition of that office in the manner propoſed, would be an uſur-

uſurpation of the executive power by the deliberative, which was evidently unconſtitutional.

Oppoſition contended, on the other hand, that two Secretaries of State only, had proved fully ſufficient in the moſt flouriſhing period of this country. That it was preciſely from the date, when a third was appointed, that its proſperity began to decline: the former exiſtence of a third could not therefore be alledged as any argument of his neceſſity. The charge of infringing the executive rights of the Crown, did not apply to the privilege long enjoyed, and exerciſed by Parliament, to inſpect and regulate whatever appertained to the government of this country, whether in the framing of laws, or the correction of abuſes in every department of the ſtate without exception.

The debate on this queſtion laſted till three o'clock in the morning. It was managed with great ability on both ſides. Argumentation, knowledge, and eloquence, were diſplayed in a degree ſeldom known. Points of the moſt ſerious and conſtitutional nature were agitated with a fervour and vehemence equal to their importance. The limits of regal power, its duties, its pretenſions, and its prerogatives; the rights of the people, the boundaries of their claims in matters of government; in ſhort, the whole theory of the Britiſh conſtitution came into ample diſcuſſion on this occaſion. The iſſue of the debate was, that the motion for aboliſhing the office of third Secretary of State, was rejected upon a diviſion, by two hundred and eight, againſt a minority that was now increaſed to no leſs than two hundred and one.

It was remarked thereupon, by the friends of miniſtry, that this augmentation of their opponents was a concluſive proof that the influence ſo much complained of had no real exiſtence, and was hardly

of

of ſufficient weight to inſure the carrying on the neceſſary buſineſs of government.

The reply made by oppoſition to this remark, was, that the univerſal ſenſe of the people of England had been ſo loudly and ſo animatedly expreſſed, that their conſtituents were fully convinced of the neceſſity of complying with their demands.

The next object of diſcuſſion, was the Board of Trade. It was repreſented by oppoſition, as an office entirely uſeleſs in the preſent circumſtances, and anſwering no other purpoſe than to ſecure eight votes in Parliament at the yearly charge of a thouſand pounds a piece.

A gentleman who ſat at that Board, maintained its importance and utility with much knowledge and information relating to it. He was anſwered by Mr. Burke with no leſs acuteneſs. The purport of his argument was to ſhew, that when under the direction of a committee of council without ſalaries, the affairs of the Plantations had been conducted with more ability and diſpatch than ſince the appointment of that Board. In proof of this, he adduced a variety of facts and paſſages highly inſtructive and intereſting.

The iſſue of this conteſt was more favourable to oppoſition than the former. The abolition of the Board of Trade was carried by two hundred and and ſeven votes againſt one hundred and ninety-nine.

This was a ſignal defeat to miniſtry. It manifeſted that the voice of the nation, when ſeriouſly and reſolutely bent on any great point, was of too much preponderance to be reſiſted with facility, even in the very ſeat of miniſterial power.

The third debate on Mr. Burke's Eſtabliſhment Bill, was concerning the offices of Treaſurer of the Chamber, Treaſurer of the Houſhold, Cofferer, and other places connected with theſe. Miniſtry

continued

contended that theſe employments were not of a public nature, and that it would be indecent to aſſume the management of the King's Houſhold, in matters that did not relate to the government of the ſtate, and wherein his own private convenience was ſolely concerned.

Oppoſition denied the Royal Houſhold being the King's private concern. It had at all times been held by Parliament in quite another light, even in thoſe ages when the power of the Crown was far ſuperior to what it had been ſince. It was by means of theſe numerous offices about Court, that an undue influence had ſo long been ſupported. To prevent their ſuppreſſion, was to abet the continuance of that influence.

The conteſt on theſe points was very warm, and brought out a multitude of arguments of the moſt ſerious tendency in their application to the ſubject in queſtion. A variety of reflections were thrown out by oppoſition, highly diſagreeing with the maxims advanced by thoſe who argued in favour of the preſent eſtabliſhment.

On putting the queſtion whether the place of Treaſurer of the Chamber ſhould be aboliſhed, it was negatived by two hundred and eleven votes, againſt fifty-eight. The abolition of the other concomitant offices was negatived in the ſame manner.

Mr. Burke was not more ſucceſsful on bringing forwards, ſome days after, the queſtion for ſuppreſsing the employment of the Great Wardrobe, and others depending on it. The motion was rejected by two hundred and ten votes, to one hundred and eighty-three. That concerning the Board of Works, was thrown out by two hundred and three, againſt one hundred and eighteen.

The diſcuſſion on both theſe ſubjects afforded Mr. Burke an opportunity of diſplaying the great variety

of his knowledge and abilities, and of exerting a power of reaſoning, and a fertility of imagination, humour, and eloquence, that gained him the higheſt applauſe. But he was now convinced that his efforts for the eſtabliſhment of his plan, would meet with inſuperable difficulties, and that every obſtacle would be thrown in their way on the part of adminiſtration, and by the numerous expectants of their favours.

Herein he was not deceived. A rejection was given ſome days after to the propoſals for aboliſhing the offices of Maſters of the various denominations of hounds, and of Paymaſter of the Penſions, for ſuppreſſing the payment of Penſions during pleaſure, for limiting the Secret Service Money, for regulating the order in which Payments were to be made to the Civil Officers of State, and to thoſe of the King's Houſhold, and for empowering certain of the great officers of State, to call before them thoſe who kept the public accounts, and to examine them in a ſummary way.

The only clauſe which paſſed upon this occaſion, was that which enacted that the offices of Lieutenant and Enſign, and others appertaining to the Yeomen of the Guards, and the Band of Gentlemen Penſioners, ſhould, after their determination in the preſent poſſeſſors, no longer be ſold; but be given to Officers of the Army and Navy upon half pay, and of fifteen years ſtanding in their reſpective line of ſervice.

The ill ſucceſs of his attempt was the more mortifying to Mr. Burke, as he had expected, and now declared to the Houſe, that had his plan been accepted in that latitude he propoſed, more than a million would have annually been ſaved to the nation.

On the ſixth of April the petitions from the Engliſh counties, now encreaſed to the number of forty, were,

were according to a previous appointment, taken into conſideration by the Houſe of Commons.

The late Lord Aſhburton, then Mr. Dunning, opened this important buſineſs, in a ſpeech full of accuracy and forcibleneſs of argument. He obſerved, that the general purport of theſe numerous petitions amounted to a ſtrong and ſerious complaint of the unconſtitutional influence of the Crown, and the neceſſity of ſetting bounds to the profuſe expenditure of the public money.

He obſerved that ſeveral efforts had been made to ſecond the intent of theſe petitions. Sir George Saville had moved for a diſcloſal of the private penſions payable at pleaſure; Mr. Burke had produced his plan of reform; Colonel Barre had moved for a committee of Accounts; and Sir Philip Jennings Clerk had brought in a bill to exclude contractors from that Houſe: but the firſt of theſe attempts was immediately defeated; the ſecond fruſtrated by miniſterial artifice, after having received a deceitful encouragement; the third was taken out of the framer's hands by a ſtratagem from the ſame quarter; and the fourth, though it had been carried through the Houſe of Commons, was menaced with a certain overthrow in the Houſe of Lords.

Theſe attempts to procure ſatisfaction to the petitioners, having failed, it now remained for the Houſe to determine, whether the petitions preſented by the people of England, were to be complied with, or rejected. To bring this point to an iſſue, he would make two motions; the acceptance or refuſal of which muſt neceſſarily decide it.

He then moved, "That the influence of the Crown had increaſed, was ſtill increaſing, and ought to be diminiſhed." He contended that his aſſertion was of notorious truth and certainty. It was the full perſuaſion of the public, and was founded upon every indication which the nature of it admitted.

initted. This corrupt influence was arrived to ſuch a height, that perſons who ſupported the meaſures of miniſtry in Parliament, reprobated them without. He could name no leſs than fifty members of that Houſe, who acted in this ſcandalous manner.

The objections of miniſtry were grounded on a defect of proper evidence in ſupport of an aſſertion of ſo ſerious a nature: they knew of none; all appearances were againſt it: the unproſperous ſituation of public affairs afforded no viſible means of this influence. The power of the Crown, ſuch as it was, had ſubſiſted before their time; and it would be highly unjuſt to charge the preſent adminiſtration with having procured it any augmentation. Government had for many years been carried on exactly on the ſame plan, and by the ſame means as now, without ſuch imputations as miniſters experienced at this day.

Great indignation was expreſſed at the mention of that infamous duplicity which induced men to act for miniſtry within doors, and againſt them without. The fact to ſome appeared problematic: they were loaded with execration, and even bid to depart from the miniſterial ſide of the Houſe.

The part which was taken on that day by Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, was ſtrongly deciſive againſt miniſtry. He ſupported the motion in the firmeſt and moſt pointed language, appealing to the conſcience and feelings of every gentleman preſent, whether they could deny it. His opinion was, that the powers lodged in the hands of the Crown, were fully adequate to all the purpoſes of a good, and more than ſufficient for the purpoſes of a bad government. He told the Houſe, that the petitions before them ought to have been prevented, by removing the cauſe without waiting to be reminded of their duty. They ſat there as the repreſentatives of the people; and could not be ignorant that they

they were bound to conſult the advantage of their conſtituents, whenever it was clearly pointed out, preferably and antecedently to all other conſiderations.

After one of the moſt memorable debates that had for many years been heard in the Houſe of Commons, Mr. Dunning's motion was carried upon a diviſion, by two hundred and thirty-three votes againſt two hundred and fifteen.

The ſecond motion made by Mr. Dunning, was, that the Houſe of Commons was as competent to examine into, and correct abuſes in the expenditure of the revenue appropriated to the Civil Liſt, as of every other branch of the public revenue, whenever it might ſeem expedient.

Another motion was added to it by Mr. Thomas Pitt, whoſe exertions on the ſide of oppoſition had been remarkable on this day. He moved that it was the duty of that Houſe to provide an immediate and effectual redreſs of the abuſes complained of in the petitions that had been preſented to it from the different parts of the kingdom.

Notwithſtanding the requeſt and entreaty on the part of miniſtry, that no further proceedings ſhould take place that night, both theſe motions were carried without a diviſion: ſo reſolute were thoſe in oppoſition to make the moſt of an advantage which was ſeldom in their poſſeſſion, and of which they ſeemed to doubt the permanency.

To complete the ſucceſs of oppoſition, the reſolutions that had paſſed were reported, read a firſt and ſecond time, and agreed to without a diviſion. Such an expeditious method of proceeding was ſtrongly oppoſed by miniſtry; but its influence was at this moment entirely loſt; and it was ſaid at the time, that had it not been for the lateneſs of the hour, and the evident impropriety of puſhing mat-

ters further at that inſtant, oppoſition might have carried whatever they thought proper.

Never had miniſtry been treated with ſo much ſeverity of language as on this occaſion. They were accuſed of having, through their ſervility and baſe ſubmiſſion to that ſecret influence by which they were overruled, ſacrificed the glory of their country, and leſſened its importance irrecoverably. Before they aſſumed the reins of adminiſtration, the name of an Engliſhman was reſpectable in the moſt flattering degree; but as if a conſpiracy had been formed againſt it by thoſe who dictated the meaſures of miniſtry, all had been done that could have poſſibly been imagined, to lower it in the eſtimation of the world.

No ſtronger proof, it was ſaid, could be adduced of the alarming influence of the Crown, than the retention of their places and power by the preſent miniſtry, after the load of calamity and diſgrace they had heaped upon this country, and in defiance of the repeated complaints of the public, and the general cry for their diſmiſſion.

The invectives againſt them out of doors were ſtill more outrageous. The diſcontent of people at large was now riſen to ſuch a height, that they received the news of the miniſterial defeat in the Houſe, with as much exultation, as if a victory of the laſt importance had been obtained over an enemy.

It was obſerved by ſome ſhrewd foreigners at this time, that nothing could exhibit the ſuperior pretenſions of the Engliſh to liberty, in a more diſparaging light, than the fixed and unaltered contradiction of their wiſhes for a change of miniſtry and meaſures which was experienced at this period; when, notwithſtanding the repreſentatives of the nation united with their conſtituents in the moſt unqualified

unqualified reprobation of the conduct of their rulers, theſe were ſtill able to keep their places.

After many years of fruitleſs endeavours, oppoſition now ſaw itſelf maſter of the field. It reſolved to loſe no time in improving this ſucceſs. On the next meeting it was moved by Mr. Dunning, that to aſcertain the independence of Parliament, and remove all ſuſpicions of its being under undue influence, there ſhould every ſeſſion, ſeven days after the meeting of Parliament, be laid before that Houſe, an account of all ſums iſſued out of the Civil Liſt, or any other branch of the revenue, ſince the laſt receſs, in favour of any of its members.

Little oppoſition was made to this propoſal. As it was evidently founded on the neceſſity of eſtabliſhing a ſubſtantial teſt of independence, no valid arguments could be produced againſt it, and it was carried with no difficulty.

Encouraged by this ſucceſs, Mr. Dunning next moved, that the following officers ſhould be excluded from a ſeat in the Houſe:—The Treaſurers of the Chamber and Houſhold, the Cofferer, Comptroller, and Maſter of the Houſhold, the Clerks of the Green Cloth, and their deputies.

This queſtion was debated with much more warmth than the former. As it was in fact a place bill, it met with great obſtruction from the miniſterial quarter. Its whole ſtrength was collected to defeat it. But after a well-diſputed conteſt, it was carried, upon a diviſion, by two hundred and fifteen, againſt two hundred and thirteen.

Such were the conſequences immediately reſulting from the fervour with which the petitions from the Engliſh counties had been inforced; but this triumph of oppoſition was of ſhort duration. It was indeed a novelty of a ſtriking nature. The whole kingdom ſtood aſtoniſhed at the readineſs

with which its repreſentatives had paſſed ſo many reſolutions militating againſt the influence of miniſtry; and people were at a loſs to what cauſes they were to aſcribe ſo wonderful a change in men who had hitherto ſeemed ſo reſolutely devoted to the will of adminiſtration.

But this popular diſpoſition did not laſt above a week. It expired on the motion of Mr. Crewe, for excluding Revenue Officers from voting at Parliamentary Elections. After a long debate, it was rejected by two hundred and twenty-four, againſt one hundred and ninety-five.

In the Houſe of Lords, the Contractors Bill met with the overthrow with which it had been threatened. The principal arguments againſt it were, that it would indiſpoſe ſubſtantial people from engaging to furniſh neceſſaries to the fleet and army, and would throw that buſineſs into the hands of neceſſitous perſons, whoſe circumſtances precluded them from aſpiring to a ſeat in Parliament; and who therefore could not reaſonably be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs the means of fulfilling their contracts.

It was urged with great vehemence, that the public was impoſed upon by a factious cry of Independence of Parliament, and Economy, which had perverted the minds of the people, and ſeduced them into opinions ſubverſive of government. It was time for the Houſe of Peers, as the conſtitutional barrier between King and People, to ſet their faces againſt this ſpirit of innovation, which, under pretence of reforming abuſes, aimed at the deſtruction of thoſe eſtabliſhed rules of government, which till now had been quietly ſubmitted to; and without an acquieſcence wherein, the ſtate would be ſubject to endleſs turbulence and commotion.

Theſe, and a variety of other allegations, tending much to the ſame purpoſe, were received by oppoſition with the ſtrongeſt expreſſions of denial and

and diſapprobation. It was aſſerted that the excluſion of contractors, was a meaſure founded on the ſame principle as that which excluded multitudes in England from voting in the election of their own repreſentatives. Men of the higheſt capacity, and the pureſt principles, were, if not duly qualified in other reſpects, ſhut out from all pretenſions to be elected. Perſons in certain public offices were for that reaſon denied a ſeat in Parliament. The principle on which this regulation was founded, admitted of no controverſy. It was the danger all men were in of ſubmitting to that authority to which they owed their conſequence. This ſubmiſſiveneſs was a principle that pervaded all mankind: men of ſordid diſpoſitions were governed by no other; and men of the nobleſt inclinations found it difficult to reſiſt. The generality, if not indeed all contractors without exception, were individuals bred up in mercantile affairs, which naturally habituated their minds to keenneſs in the purſuit of their pecuniary intereſts: ſuch a frame of mind neceſſarily expoſed them to be powerfully influenced by the proſpect of lucre. Such men, therefore, ought not to be placed in the way of temptation, eſpecially when their yielding to it might be prejudicial to the public in matters of the higheſt importance.

Nor would the public ſuffer any detriment from their excluſion, as miniſtry had thought proper to ſuppoſe might happen from the abilities ſome of them might poſſeſs. The abilities of ſuch perſons were ſeldom known to extend beyond the knowledge of enriching themſelves at the public expence. Herein their abilities were undeniable; but in that knowledge which became a gentleman entruſted with political buſineſs, they could hardly fail being deficient, from the narrowneſs of their education; as it was notorious that moſt, if not all of them, were

were individuals merely converſant in trade; and confined to thoſe walks of life, wherein very little improvement in any other branches is obtainable.

Allowing ſuch perſons to be poſſeſſed of the fairеſt character in their profeſſion, were not the profits accruing from the contracts given to them, an ample reward for their diligence and fidelity in fulfilling them according to agreement? It was well known that theſe profits were often ſo great, as to exceed all the reaſonable proportions of gain derivable from any other branch of buſineſs. Such uncommon encouragements from miniſters were never beſtowed without a certainty of their being fully balanced by the receivers.

Experience manifeſted how truly the miniſtry calculated in theſe matters. Contractors were as firm and ſtaunch adherents to it, as any denomination of men. They had no opinions but what were ſtrictly conformable to its directions; and were conſtant and implicit in their obedience.

It had been objected by miniſtry, that open and public contracts would prove the means of diſcloſing ſecrets of ſtate which ought to remain concealed. Deſigns in contemplation againſt the enemy, could not be carried on with probability of ſucceſs, were they once to be apprized of them; and private contracts only could effectually prevent the conveyance of information.

But this objection, it was alledged by oppoſition, was eaſily removed by adverting to the contracts made by the Victualling-Office. They were public in the extremeſt degree: every circumſtance was made known that related to the ſhipping which were to be ſupplied; yet no inconvenience aroſe from this long eſtabliſhed mode. The enemy had no other means of coming at the knowledge of intended expeditions, than the meer account of ſtores and proviſions ſhipped on board a ſquadron: the utmoſt

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that could be diſcovered by ſuch a circumſtance, was the length or the ſhortneſs of the voyage; but the real object of its deſtination muſt be aſcertained by other methods.

Some very ſevere inſinuations of miſconduct in miniſtry were thrown out upon this occaſion. It was ſurmiſed that the charges of the contract for rum, which was paid for in currency, had been made out in ſterling money; and that after a large premium had been allowed for ſupplying the forces in America with gold from Portugal, the remittances were all made in Engliſh guineas. To what was this to be attributed?—To inadvertance, neglect, or connivance?

The danger of diſcouraging men of great property from entering into contracts with government, and of throwing this buſineſs into the hands of improper people, was treated as groundleſs and chimerical. No man that had intereſt enough to obtain a contract, could ever want the ampleſt credit to enable him to perform it.

But that which gave the greateſt offence to oppoſition, was the manner in which miniſtry had rebuked the violent ſpirit that had been rouſed throughout the nation for the independence of Parliament, and the reform of abuſes. That ſpirit, it was replied, had too long lain dormant. It was the genuine ſpirit of the Engliſh conſtitution; and it was only by keeping it awake, that thoſe reformations could be brought about, which the times demanded. The people had not been impoſed upon by falſe pretences; they were witneſſes of the moſt unprecedented profuſion; and were warranted in requiring integrity and œconomy in the management of the national revenue: this was a conſtitutional requeſt, and was not dictated by turbulence or the ſpirit of innovation, as had been ſuggeſted. A dutiful petition was the right of the ſubject; and

could not be conſtrued into a diſturbance of government.

A variety of other arguments were produced on each ſide, in the courſe of this debate, when the queſtion being put, the Contractors Bill was rejected by ſixty-one votes, to forty-one

In the Houſe of Commons the decline of the popular intereſt became daily more apparent. In purſuance of the determination to comply with the wiſhes expreſſed by the people, Mr. Dunning moved, that an addreſs ſhould be preſented to the Throne againſt a diſſolution or prorogation of Parliament, until meaſures had been taken to prevent the improper influence, and to remedy the other grievances complained of in the petitions.

Oppoſition was not unaware of the defection intended by a number of their late auxiliaries. In order, if poſſible, to preſerve their adherence, they expatiated with unuſual force and vehemence on the propriety of carrying into execution the plan of reform that had been ſo happily commenced, and the diſhonour of relinquiſhing it after ſo ſtrong and ſolemn an avowal of its neceſſity. No man, it was ſaid, that had voted for the reſolutions that had paſſed on the ſixth of April, could, conſiſtently with his reputation, depart from them, without laying himſelf open to contempt, and incurring the imputation of acting from the baſeſt motives.

The debates on the motion were long and animated. A repetition enſued of all that had been advanced on the ſubject of the petitions. The part now taken by thoſe who had recently gone over to oppoſition, and who now returned to their former connection, was reprobated in the moſt unreſerved terms that language could afford. But arguments and remonſtrances were laviſhed to no purpoſe; they continued immoveable in the reſolution they had formed to reſume the ſupport of miniſtry; and when

when the queſtion was put, the motion was rejected by two hundred and fifty-four votes, againſt two hundred and three.

Such a deſertion in the day of trial, rouſed the reſentment of oppoſition to the higheſt pitch. The miniſterial ſide of the Houſe would gladly have availed itſelf of the lateneſs of the hour to break it up, as it was paſt midnight: but Mr. Fox riſing, the Speaker inſiſted that the Houſe ſhould remain ſitting.

The talents of Mr. Fox were diſplayed on this occaſion with an energy that aſtoniſhed even thoſe againſt whom they were directed with the moſt unrelenting ſeverity. He treated thoſe members who had deſerted oppoſition with the utmoſt diſdain and contempt, and beſtowed upon them the moſt unqualified reproaches that anger could ſuggeſt, and eloquence could expreſs. He repreſented the vote which had juſt paſſed, as a ſhame and ſcandal to the Houſe. Men who had ſolemnly bound themſelves to ſtand by the cauſe of their conſtituents, had now baſely and treacherouſly deceived them: they had, in defiance of diſgrace and loſs of character, gone over to their enemies; and aſſiſted in reinſtating them on that footing of power, from which they had promiſed in the moſt faithful manner to contribute in removing them. After betraying their friends ſo ignominiouſly, what epithets could they expect, but thoſe of unprincipled and ſordid ſlaves to the meaneſt of all human paſſions.

Mr. Dunning was no leſs pointed in his ſtrictures on thoſe who had forſaken the ſide of oppoſition. He charged them with the fouleſt breach of faith, of which perſons in a public ſtation could be guilty: they had deceived the people into erroneous meaſures; and by holding out falſe pretences of befriending them, had prevented them from adopting

ing thoſe meaſures they had in contemplation to procure a redreſs of their grievances.

It was now the unanimous opinion of oppoſition, that the deciſion of this day had put an end to all reaſonable hopes of compaſſing the intent of the petitions. The pains that had been taken to convene the people of the beſt repute and character throughout the nation, and to take their ſenſe upon the preſent ſtate of affairs, were now, they ſaid, rendered uſeleſs by the treachery of their repreſentatives.

The accuſations levelled at miniſtry by this declaration, were too heavy to paſs unanſwered. It was therefore replied, that the petitions preferred by the people ought by no means to be conſidered as rejected: they ſtood on the ſame ground as before, and would employ the attention of Parliament in the ſame manner as if the motion made on this day had not met with a negative.

The next attempt in favour of the petitions, was a motion made on the ſide of oppoſition, that no further grants of money ſhould take place until the grievances they complained of were redreſſed. But it was rejected by a majority of eighty-nine, to fifty-four; as was alſo another motion by Mr. Dunning, for taking them into conſideration, by one hundred and ſeventy-ſeven, to one hundred and thirty-four.

The two laſt ſubjects of debate produced in the Houſe of Commons in conſequence of the ſpirit excited by the petitions, were the Commiſſion of Accounts firſt propoſed by Colonel Barre, and new modelled by miniſtry on its own plan; and the Extraordinaries of the Army.

Oppoſition objected that miniſtry had appointed commiſſioners who had no ſeat in the Houſe; which was depriving it of its excluſive right of inſpecting the management of the public money, as well as of granting it.

It

It was replied by miniſtry, that the immediate buſineſs of Parliament was ſo great and comprehenſive, and required ſuch perpetual attendance, that no members of that Houſe could find leiſure for ſo arduous a taſk as the examination of public accounts. It was alſo alledged, that were they to be employed in this buſineſs, it would occaſion endleſs altercations, and ſubject the parties concerned to perpetual ſtrictures, notwithſtanding their caution and integrity.

The Extraordinaries of the Army were brought before the Houſe with great clearneſs and accuracy by Colonel Barre. According to his ſtatement it appeared, that the ſum of three millions eight hundred thouſand pounds had been applied to the ſervice of the land forces in North America, during the years ſeventy-five, ſeventy-ſix, ſeventy-ſeven, and ſeventy-eight; and one million five hundred and eighty-eight thouſand, in the year ſeventy-nine: of the firſt ſum no ſatisfactory account had been given to the Houſe; and of the ſecond no account at all.

He moved the admiſſion of this ſtatement, and that to allow of ſuch large ſums to be expended in extraordinaries, without a regular account, and without the ſanction of Parliament, was not authoriſed by precedent, invaded the right of the Houſe of Commons, and was one of the abuſes complained of in the petitions preſented to that Houſe; and that the appointment of new and expenſive offices in the army, without neceſſity, was a waſte of the public revenue, which tended to a dangerous increaſe of that corrupt influence which occaſioned ſo much alarm, and was become ſo heavy a grievance.

The debates upon theſe motions were carried on with great ſpirit on both ſides. Oppoſition pleaded on one hand, the impropriety of conſenting to any expenditure without an explicit and circumſtantial account;

account; and miniſtry contended on the other, for the indiſpenſible neceſſity of keeping ſecret a variety of occurrences in the pecuniary department, and of truſting implicitly to the honour and diſcretion, as well as to the abilities of perſons in high command, or employed in difficult commiſſions.

Colonel Barre diſtinguiſhed himſelf as much upon this occaſion, by the variety of reaſonings with which he ſeconded his motions, as by the perſeverance and ſagacity with which he had gone through ſo laborious an inveſtigation. The conteſt laſted till near two o'clock in the morning, when the motion was rejected, upon a diviſion, by one hundred and twenty-three votes, to fifty-ſeven.

CHAP.

CHAP. L.

Inſurrections in London.

1780.

THE unfavourable reception of the petitions preſented to Parliament by the different counties, and of the plan of reform propoſed by Mr. Burke, with the rejection of the ſeveral motions made by the popular party, occaſioned great diſcontent, and confirmed the diſſatisfaction and ill opinion which the people had conceived of the majority of their repreſentatives.

It was in the height of that ill temper which the conduct of Parliament had created in the multitude, that thoſe diſcontents broke out which had their foundation in religious phrenzy, and which were ſo near involving the kingdom in univerſal deſolation.

The hardſhips under which individuals profeſſing the Roman Catholic perſuaſion had laboured for many years in England, had lately awakened the conſideration of the liberal minded. The inutility and impropriety of perſecuting people from whom no danger was apprehended, and who were not ſuſpected of diſaffection to the civil conſtitution of this country, induced ſeveral perſons of rank and influence to undertake the procuring them relief.

A variety of motives militated in favour of ſuch a meaſure:—A remarkable ſpirit of toleration had begun to diffuſe itſelf through ſeveral parts of Europe, and that outrageous zeal for the propagation of particular tenets of religion, which had occaſioned ſo many calamities, was daily ſubſiding,

even in ſome of thoſe countries which had experienced them moſt.

It was time, in the opinion of men of underſtanding and moderation, to leave mankind in perfect freedom in all matters relating to their conſcience. The liberty of thinking and ſpeaking, ſo widely enjoyed in England, ill agreed with thoſe oppreſſive regulations enacted againſt a perſuaſion, the adherents to which had long demeaned themſelves with the utmoſt humility and patience, under the many diſcouragements to which they were ſubject by law.

Thoſe regulations had been framed in boiſterous and unſettled times, when the minds of men were influenced by an unfortunate mixture of political and religious notions, that rendered theſe improperly ſubſervient to each other, and baniſhed all candour and generoſity from public tranſactions. In thoſe tempeſtuous æras, an obſtinate partiality to their own maxims in affairs of church and ſtate, accompanied with an invincible abhorrence of all others, created in oppoſite parties an averſeneſs to ſentiments of toleration; and the conſciouſneſs of this reciprocal diſpoſition, led them to refuſe each other all indulgence and forbearance, to which they were not compelled by abſolute neceſſity or mutual convenience.

But theſe unhappy times were no more. Society was become too enlightened to ſuffer mankind to be the victims of falſe notions in religion. As no country upon earth was bleſſed with a freer conſtitution than England, this freedom, it was aſſerted, ought to be extended to all ſubjects of inveſtigation of which the human mind is capable, and no reſtraint ſhould be laid on the profeſſion of principles that were not immoral, or tending to diſturb the peace of the community.

Such

Such being the ideas eſtabliſhed among the judicious and reaſonable, it was not ſurpriſing that they ſhould ſeize the firſt opportunity of relieving a denomination of people who ſuffered unneceſſary oppreſſion.

The calamities of the times had afforded the Engliſh Roman Catholics a very proper occaſion to manifeſt their attachment to government. They preſented a moſt loyal and dutiful addreſs to the King, which was drawn up with an elegance of expreſſion, and a nobleneſs of ſentiment that did them great honour.

It contained the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of affection and fidelity to the King's perſon, and the civil government of this country, which, in the words of the addreſs, having been propagated through all changes of religious opinions and eſtabliſhments, had been at laſt perfected by that revolution which had placed the preſent royal family on the throne of theſe kingdoms, and inſeparably united its title to the crown with the laws and liberties of the people.

"Our excluſion," ſaid they, "from many of "the benefits of that conſtitution, has not dimi-"niſhed our reverence for it. We behold with "ſatisfaction the felicity of our fellow-ſubjects; "and we partake of the general proſperity which "reſults from an inſtitution ſo full of wiſdom. We "have patiently ſubmitted to ſuch reſtrictions and "diſcouragements as the legiſlature thought expe-"dient. We have thankfully received ſuch relaxa-"tions of the rigour of the laws, as the mildneſs of "an enlightened age, and the benignity of the Bri-"tiſh government have gradually produced; and "we ſubmiſſively wait, without preſuming to ſug-"geſt either time or meaſure, for ſuch other indul-"gence as thoſe happy cauſes cannot fail in their "own ſeaſon to effect.

"We beg leave to aſſure your Majeſty, that our "diſſent from the legal eſtabliſhment in matters of "religion, is purely conſcientious; that we hold "no opinions adverſe to your Majeſty's government, "or repugnant to the duties of good citizens; and "we truſt that this has been ſhown more decifively "by our irreproachable conduct for many years "paſt, under circumſtances of public diſcountenance and diſpleaſure, than it can be manifeſted "by any declaration whatever.

"In a time of public danger, when your Majeſty's ſubjects can have but one intereſt, and "ought to have but one wiſh, and one ſentiment, "we think it our duty to aſſure your Majeſty of "our unreſerved affection to your government, of "our unalterable attachment to the cauſe and welfare of this our common country, and our utter "deteſtation of the deſigns and views of any foreign power againſt the dignity of your Crown, "and the ſafety and tranquility of your ſubjects.

"The delicacy of our ſituation is ſuch, that we "do not preſume to point out the particular means "by which we may be allowed to teſtify our zeal "to your Majeſty, and our wiſhes to ſerve our "country; but we entreat leave faithfully to aſſure "your Majeſty, that we ſhall be perfectly ready, "on every occaſion, to give ſuch proofs of our "fidelity, and the purity of our intentions, as your "Majeſty's wiſdom, and the ſenſe of the nation "ſhall at any time deem expedient."

This addreſs was preſented to the King on the firſt day of May, ſeventy-eight. It was ſigned by the Duke of Norfolk, the Earls of Surrey and Shrewſbury, the Lords Stourton, Petre, Arundel, Dormer, Teynham, Clifford, and Linton; and by one hundred and ſixty-three Commoners of rank and fortune.

The

The ſenſible part of the nation was highly ſatisfied with this demonſtration of reſpect and attachment on the part of the Roman Catholics, and teſtified in return a willingneſs to conſider and treat them as loyal ſubjects.

The only obſtacle that ſtood in the way of their wiſhes, was the difficulty of overcoming the prejudices of the lower claſſes, the narrowneſs of whoſe education, and means of information, might lead them to diſapprove and condemn the indulgence ſhown to the people of a perſuaſion which they had been taught to look upon with horror and deteſtation.

But notwithſtanding the prepoſſeſſions of the vulgar, it was determined by ſeveral individuals of generous and liberal ſentiments, to eſpouſe their cauſe, as far as it could be done conſiſtently with the principles of the conſtitution, and the general temper of the times, which though not averſe to releaſe them from thoſe burthens which were evidently unreaſonable, were ſtill apprehenſive that danger might enſue from granting them unqualified liberty. Among thoſe who patroniſed them were ſome of the principal members of oppoſition. This was a circumſtance that operated ſtrikingly in their favour; it ſhowed that thoſe whom the public eſteemed the moſt ſtrenuous friends to the freedom and conſtitution of this country, did not imagine they would be endangered, by treating the Roman Catholics with more lenity than they had hitherto experienced.

About the middle of May, ſeventy-eight, Sir George Saville made a motion for the repeal of ſome penalties enacted againſt the people of that perſuaſion. He grounded his motion on the neceſſity of vindicating the honour, and aſſerting the true principles of the Proteſtant religion, of which the peculiar merit was to admit of no perſecution. It

ill became the profeſſors of ſuch a religion, to be guilty of that intolerance with which they reproached others. The ſtatutes he meant to repeal, were ſuch as gave occaſion to deeds that debaſed, and were a diſgrace to human nature, by inciting relations to diveſt themſelves of the feelings of humanity, and by encouraging the rapacity of informers.

Among a variety of motives for relieving the Roman Catholics from the terror of theſe ſevere ſtatutes, he mentioned with great warmth of praiſe the above addreſs. He repreſented it as a full proof of the loyal diſpoſition of the Roman Catholics, and as an unfeigned teſtimony of the ſoundneſs of their political principles; which alone were to be conſidered in the government of human ſociety.

While theſe were pure, and conducive to the good of the public, they ought not to be debarred from participating in the benefits of a government, to the ſupport of which they contributed in common with the remainder of their fellow ſubjects. In order, however, to ſilence the objections of thoſe who might ſuſpect them of duplicity, and to remove, as far as human prudence could ſuggeſt, all apprehenſions of that nature, a teſt ſhould be framed of ſo binding and ſolemn a nature, that no man could be ſuppoſed ſo void of underſtanding, as to imagine that any authority could annul its efficacy.

The pains and penalties of the ſtatutes to be repealed, were laid before the Houſe with great accuracy and impartiality by Mr. Dunning. By theſe ſtatutes it was made felony in a foreign clergyman of the Roman communion, and high treaſon in one that was a native of this kingdom, to teach the doctrines, or perform divine ſervice, according to the rites of that church; the eſtates of perſons educated abroad in that perſuaſion, were forfeited to the next Proteſtant heir; a ſon, or any other neareſt relation, being a Proteſtant, was empowered to take poſſeſ-

ſion

ſion of his own father's, or neareſt of kin's eſtate, during their lives: a Roman Catholic was diſabled from acquiring any legal property by purchaſe.

No man could deny that theſe reſtrictions were cruel and oppreſſive in the extreme, and reflected much diſgrace on a people pretending to humanity and civilization. The leaſt a Britiſh Parliament could do, was to repeal theſe monuments of a barbarous and unfeeling age, ſowered by fanaticiſm into a forgetfulneſs of the rights of human nature. Even after theſe ſevere ſtatutes were annulled, individuals profeſſing the Roman Catholic religion, would remain under ſufficient controul and diſcouragement from thoſe that remained.

The mildneſs of the Britiſh government did not indeed countenance the practice of the ſeverities enacted by theſe ſtatutes; but ſtill they were inſtruments of tyranny in the hands of the vileſt part of ſociety; informers, and individuals loſt to all feelings. The proſpect of lucre ſubjected every man of the Roman perſuaſion to the ill uſage of people of this deſcription; as on their evidence, the magiſtates were bound, however unwilling, to carry theſe cruel laws into execution.

In conſequence of theſe repreſentations, which were too ſtrictly true, and were not in the leaſt exaggerated, the motion made in favour of the Roman Catholices, was received without one diſſentient voice. A bill in purſuance to its intent, was brought in, and paſſed both Houſes with the utmoſt unanimity.

This deliverance from the principal oppreſſions under which they had ſo long ſuffered, was accepted by them with ſuch marks and expreſſions of gratitude, as rendered them intirely worthy of the notice and relief they had obtained from the equitable diſpoſition of the legiſlature.

The teſt or oath that accompanied the repeal of theſe obnoxious acts, was conceived in the ſtrongeſt and moſt expreſſive terms. They were enjoined to ſwear allegiance to the King's perſon and family, and to abjure the pretenſions to the Crown, of all others, that perſon eſpecially who aſſumed the title of King of Great Britain, under the appellation of Charles the Third. They were to declare their diſbelief and deteſtation of the following poſitions :—That it is lawful to put individuals to death on pretence of their being heretics—that no faith is to be kept with heretics—that Princes excommunicated by the Pope and Council, or by the See of Rome, or any other authority, may be depoſed or murdered by their ſubjects or by any others—that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign Prelate, or Sovereign, is intitled to any temporal or civil juriſdiction, or pre-eminence, either directly or indirectly in this kingdom. They were ſolemnly to profeſs, that they made the aforeſaid declarations with the utmoſt ſincerity, and in the ſtricteſt and plaineſt meaning of the words and language of the teſt, without harbouring any ſecret perſuaſion that any diſpenſation from Rome, or any other authority, could acquit or abſolve them from the obligations contracted by this oath, or declare it null and void.

In conſequence of the lenity ſhewn to the Roman Catholics, the Proteſtant Diſſenters from the eſtabliſhed church, applied to Parliament, in the enſuing year, for an extenſion of the laws already enacted in their favour. The motion made in their behalf met with due approbation; and was carried through both Houſes to their intire ſatisfaction.

But this liberality of ſentiments, though approved of in the caſe of the Proteſtant Diſſenters, did not meet with the ſame approbation in other reſpects. The ſpirit of fanaticiſm, though vaniſhed from

from the enlightened part of ſociety, proved, upon this occaſion, to be far from extinct in this iſland. The relief extended to the Roman Catholics, revived it in a manner that aſtoniſhed all Europe; which had long conſidered the Britiſh nation, as totally delivered from religious prejudices.

The indulgence ſhewn to the Roman Catholics in England, encouraged thoſe of the ſame perſuaſion in Scotland to hope for the ſame relief. Several Scotch gentlemen of great rank and character, and who were members of Parliament, expreſſed their warmeſt wiſhes, that it ſhould be extended to their country; and declared their intention to bring in a bill for that purpoſe the following ſeſſion.

The great progreſs of knowledge and polite learning among the genteel claſſes in Scotland, gave no room to imagine that any oppoſition to this meaſure would ariſe from that quarter. There were, on the contrary, good reaſons to believe that it would be very favourably received. The general aſſembly of the church of Scotland openly approved of it, in rejecting, by a majority of no leſs than one hundred ſuffrages, a remonſtrance that had been propoſed againſt it. In conſequence of theſe flattering appearances, a petition was prepared for preſentation to Parliament on behalf of the Roman Catholics in Scotland.

But theſe agreeable expectations were ſoon damped through the bigotry of ſome individuals, who unhappily found means to kindle a flame of oppoſition againſt the benevolence intended by Parliament, of which ſo enlightened and ſenſible a people as the Scotch were thought wholly unſuſceptible.

A pamphlet was publiſhed againſt the doctrine and profeſſors of the Roman religion, which repreſented them as the common foes to mankind, and the

the diſturbers of all ſtates. It was circulated among all claſſes, and raiſed a number of enemies to the intended petition.

As religious zeal always abounds moſt among the ignorant and the uninformed, it was principally among the lower claſſes the enmity to the propoſed indulgence was found to predominate. It ſpread gradually through the people at large; and though generouſly diſavowed by the intelligent and better ſort, by the Synod of Lothian in particular, compoſed of perſons highly eminent for their abilities and character, it gained ground every where, and threatened a total defeat to any ſcheme of that nature.

This oppoſition was at firſt chiefly conducted by a few obſcure agents at Edinburgh, who were, it is ſaid, ſo conſcious of their own inſignificancy, that they concealed themſelves with the utmoſt care from the knowledge of the public. They aſſumed, however, the title of Committee for the Proteſtant Intereſt; and under that denomination carried on a correſpondence with all thoſe who coincided with their opinions, and who now began to form a very large proportion of the common people in Scotland.

As the committee at Edinburgh, from its reſidence in the capital of the kingdom, was deemed to conſiſt of perſons of the firſt importance, it directed in a manner the motions of all the others. And its dictates were ſubmitted to with an acquieſcence truly ſurpriſing in ſo acute and diſcerning a nation.

This committee was, according to report, compoſed of thirteen members; the principal of which were, a merchant, a goldſmith, and a writing-maſter in an hoſpital. The others were tradeſmen and clerks in public offices, or private counting houſes; and their ſecretary was a young lad in his apprenticeſhip.

It

It ought, however, to be noticed, that the perſons who made up this committee, acted from no mean or mercenary views; their principles, though wrongly directed, were laudable, and aimed at the preſervation of the Proteſtant religion, and the liberties of their country; both which they conceived were in danger, from the indulgence of government to individuals of the Roman Catholic perſuaſion.

Actuated by theſe ideas, they exerted themſelves with ſo much activity, and excited ſuch a ſpirit of outrageouſneſs and intolerance againſt them, that convinced of the inutility of endeavouring to ſtem ſo dreadful a torrent, the principal gentlemen of that perſuaſion thought it requiſite for their ſafety, to convey an intimation to the Britiſh miniſtry, that they were deſirous to drop the application they had propoſed to make, for an indulgence ſimilar to that which had been granted to their fellow-ſubjects in England of the ſame communion.

They had alſo recourſe to other precautions in order to mitigate the fury of the multitude, and to leſſen that reſentment againſt government for its favourable diſpoſition towards the Roman Catholics, which they were conſcious would be wreaked upon themſelves. They publiſhed in the newſpapers the repreſentation they had made to miniſtry, ſignifying their deſiſtance from any further ſolicitations for the repeal of the penal ſtatutes; hoping thereby to convince the public, that they were ſincerely deſirous to remove any cauſe of diſſatisfaction on their own account, and to ſubmit to any inconveniency ſooner than occaſion any diſturbance.

But that inexorable ſpirit of miſtaken zeal, which had been foſtered with ſo much induſtry, was now kindled to ſuch a height, that no conſiderations were able to quell it. The enraged populace incenſed at their betters on account of their moderation, and

the liberality of their principles, accuſed them in the moſt inſolent manner of having betrayed the cauſe of God and Religion.

As charges of this nature in the mouths of the vulgar, uſually portend the perpetration of miſchief, it became the duty of perſons inveſted with due authority, to have an eye on their proceedings, in order to check any irregularities on their firſt appearance. But whether from inadvertance, or an idea that theſe popular diſcontents would ſubſide the ſooner for being left to themſelves, no ſort of notice was taken of this intemperate behaviour of the commonalty; and they ſeemed to have been abandoned to their own will and guidance.

In the mean time threats of the moſt vengeful nature were daily thrown out againſt the Roman Catholics; they were inſulted in the open ſtreets, and treated with all manner of indignity; but this was only a prelude to the deſigns in agitation againſt them.

On the ſecond day of February, ſeventy-nine, the populace met according to appointment, in order to carry into execution the various projects they had in contemplation. They began by an attack upon a houſe inhabited by a Roman Catholic Biſhop, with others of his perſuaſion, and which contained a place of worſhip. They committed it to the flames; and it was with difficulty the people who dwelt in it were able to make their eſcape. They deſtroyed in the ſame manner another houſe that had alſo a chapel; after which they proceeded to vent their reſentment on ſeveral individuals of that perſuaſion by burning their effects.

The next objects of their vengeance were thoſe who had patronized the Roman Catholics. They beſet the houſes of Dr. Robertſon and Mr. Croſby, two gentlemen eminently noted for the liberality of their principles: the latter was a lawyer of the firſt diſtinction

diſtinction, but peculiarly obnoxious to the vulgar, for having acted as counſel to the Roman Catholics upon this occaſion: the former, one of the moſt elegant hiſtorians this age or country has produced. But the character of theſe two gentlemen was too highly reſpected to ſuffer them to become the victims of a deluded mob. On hearing of the intentions of the rioters, the friends of both came to their aſſiſtance in ſuch numbers, and ſo well prepared to repel the fury of the populace, that they did not dare to exerciſe the violence they had premeditated.

This diſappointment, which was accompanied by further precautions againſt their malevolent deſigns, put an end to the attempts of the mob at Edinburgh. But the ſpirit of diſſatisfaction at the indulgence intended to the Roman Catholics, ſtill remained in full force. Miniſtry was held out as harbouring a ſecret determination to undermine the Proteſtant religion, and to introduce Popery; and loaded in conſequence with the moſt outrageous invectives.

This ungovernable ſpirit was gradually communicated to the enthuſiaſtic part of the Engliſh nation. Though inconſiderable in number and importance, they poſſeſſed that activity and induſtry which fanaticiſm never fails to inſpire. They exerted themſelves with ſuch indefatigable zeal, that in a ſhort time they attracted the notice of the public through the increaſe of their ſtrength and vehemence; and began to excite the apprehenſions of thoſe who reflected what miſchiefs had ſo often been perpetrated through the violence of religious animoſities.

Notwithſtanding the general inclination to mildneſs and generoſity in religious matters, that juſtly characteriſes the people of England, it cannot, unhappily, be denied, that a ſtrong propenſity remains in numbers to undervalue and treat with harſhneſs

thoſe who differ from them in opinions of that kind. Though ſuch a diſpoſition is ſeldom found but in perſons of an illiberal education, yet as theſe are abundantly ſpread every where, the influence exerted by them is very extenſive; and the dread of incurring the ill will of the vulgar, often induces men of enlightened underſtandings to give way to long ſtanding prejudices, and to conceal a diſapprobation of thoſe proceedings which it is out of their power to prevent.

This proved unfortunately to be the caſe at the preſent period. The cry againſt Popery, of which there did not certainly exiſt the remoteſt danger, became daily more loud among the inferior claſſes; and that inveteracy which had ſubſided during ſo many years, began to revive in as powerful a degree, as if the nation were actually under the impending terrors of perſecution.

To this fanatic deluſion were added the ſecret fears of others, who, though far from being under ſuch apprehenſions, ſtill imagined it was not inconſiſtent with good policy to diſcourage a religion, from the profeſſors of which ſo much danger had accrued to the conſtitution of this country in former times. Theſe, though averſe to all acts of violence, thought it neceſſary to keep alive the antipathy to it, and by no means to ſhew the leaſt willingneſs to grant any further indulgence than it had hitherto experienced.

From this motive they were of opinion, that a ſuſpenſion of the laws enacted againſt it, though tacit and unauthoriſed, was however ſufficient to remove all complaints of harſhneſs and oppreſſion on the part of the Roman Catholics. They relied upon the humanity of the public, and the lenity of government, for a prevention of any ill treatment of them. But they looked upon the penal ſtatutes, nevertheleſs, as a requiſite bar to contain them within

within the bounds of ſubmiſſion, and fear of offending.

The unwillingneſs to diſoblige people of this deſcription, as well as the violent and zealous, compelled the more liberal-minded to act with the utmoſt guardedneſs and circumſpection. They were fully convinced that the cauſes of the reſtrictions impoſed upon individuals of the Roman perſuaſion, no longer operated; and that their circumſtances diſabled them from being of any detriment to the ſtate, however inimical their diſpoſitions might be. But no reaſon ſubſiſted for ſuſpecting theſe: they ſeemed univerſally ready to give every proof that could be required of their attachment to the government and cauſe of their country: hence it was evident their religious opinions did not militate againſt either.

Theſe were ſufficient inducements to men of candour to think them deſerving of a more favourable treatment than hitherto had been their fate. As it was a ſtanding maxim in politics, not to mingle theſe with religion, they held that no ſubjects ſhould be perſecuted for differing from the eſtabliſhed church, unleſs their tenets taught them infidelity and diſobedience to government.

Impreſſed with this conviction, they highly applauded the ſuppreſſion of the various penalties to which the Roman Catholics had been liable by the ſtatute now repealed. Some went even ſo far as to aſſert, that while they demeaned themſelves with loyalty to the ſtate, they were entitled to the enjoyment of every civil right, without exception, in common with their fellow-ſubjects.

But neither the parliamentary relaxation of the laws againſt them, nor the kind ſentiments entertained in their behalf by the benevolent and judicious, were acceptable to the bigoted part of ſociety. They ſtill continued in their prejudices, and reſolved

ed to counteract, as much as they were able, the liberal conduct of the Britiſh government.

Regardleſs of the honour it had acquired abroad by this meaſure, and of the diſgrace which the nation would incur by oppoſing it, their minds were wholly taken up with the means of rendering the condition of the Roman Catholics worſe than it was before the repeal of the penal acts, and of making both them and miniſtry repent the ſtep that had been taken in their favour.

A ſociety was formed in London, which took the title of the Proteſtant Aſſociation. In a few months it gathered great conſequence from the numbers which profeſt their adherence to the cauſe it ſupported; and it was ſoon perceived that it would proceed with vigour and reſolution in aſſerting it.

Lord George Gordon, who had rendered himſelf conſpicuous in Scotland by his oppoſition to the repeal, was elected Preſident of this Aſſociation: and it now prepared to act an explicit and deciſive part againſt the reſolutions of the legiſlature in that affair.

On the twenty-ninth of May, in the year eighty, the Aſſociators held a meeting in order to ſettle in what manner they ſhould preſent a petition to the Houſe of Commons againſt that repeal. A long ſpeech was made on this occaſion by their Preſident. He repreſented the Roman perſuaſion as gaining ground rapidly in this country; the only method of ſtopping its progreſs, was to go up with a ſpirited remonſtrance to their repreſentatives, and to tell them in plain and reſolute terms that they were determined to preſerve their religious freedom with their lives. He was ready to run all hazards with the people; but if they were too luke warm to run the ſame hazards with him, when their conſcience and their country called them forth, and meant to

ſpend

ſpend their time in mock debate and idle oppoſition, they might chuſe another leader.

His harangue was received with the loudeſt applauſe; upon which he moved, that the whole body of the Aſſociation ſhould meet on the ſecond day of June, in St. George's Fields, at ten in the morning, to accompany him to the Houſe of Commons on the delivery of the petition. This being unanimouſly aſſented to, he informed them, that if he found himſelf attended with leſs than twenty thouſand of them, he would not preſent the petition. He then directed they ſhould form themſelves into four diviſions; the firſt, ſecond, and third, to conſiſt of thoſe who belonged to the City, Weſtminſter, and Southwark; the fourth of the Scotch reſident in London. They were, by way of diſtinction, to wear blue cockades in their hats.

In this manner did Lord George Gordon bring to bear what he had often mentioned in Parliament. His ſpeeches to that Aſſembly had frequently held out the moſt fiery denunciations of the power and influence he poſſeſſed in Scotland; where he told them he was at the head of one hundred and twenty thouſand men, determined to do themſelves juſtice if it ſhould be refuſed them. He inſiſted, with the utmoſt vehemence, that ample ſecurity ſhould be given to the people of Great Britain againſt the danger of Popery.

Three days previous to the preſentation of the petition, he gave notice of it to the Houſe, and acquainted it with the manner in which it was to be preſented. From whatever motive it proceeded, this information did not ſeem to make any impreſſion upon that aſſembly. It was received with as much indifference and unconcern as all his former intimations.

On the ſecond day of June, according to appointment, about fifty or ſixty thouſand men aſſembled

in St. George's Fields. They drew up in four ſeparate diviſions, as had been agreed, and proceeded to the Parliament Houſe, with Lord George Gordon at their head. An immenſe roll of parchment was carried before them, containing the names of thoſe who had ſigned the petition.

It was two o'clock before the whole body could be collected before both Houſes of Parliament. On this occaſion they gave an univerſal and moſt tremendous ſhout, by way of ſignifying their arrival.

On their way to the Houſe, they behaved with great peaceableneſs and decency. But as ſoon as they were arrived, they ſeemed to be conſcious of the power and terror accruing from their numbers. They began by compelling all the members of both Houſes they met with, to put blue cockades in their hats, and call out, "No Popery." They forced ſome to take an oath that they would vote for the repeal of the Popery act, as they ſtiled it. They treated others with great indignity. They poſted themſelves in all the avenues to both Houſes; the doors of which they twice endeavoured to break open.

Their rage was chiefly directed againſt the members of the Houſe of Lords; and among them to the perſonages of the higheſt diſtinction in the realm: ſeveral of them were uſed in the moſt brutal manner, and narrowly eſcaped with their lives.

During theſe outrageous proceedings, Lord George Gordon moved for leave to bring up the petition. This was readily granted; but when he propoſed it ſhould be taken into immediate conſideration, it was ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by almoſt the whole Houſe.

Enraged at this oppoſition, Lord George Gordon came out ſeveral times to the people during the debates, acquainting them how averſe the Houſe appeared

peared to grant their petition. He particulariſed thoſe who had ſpoken againſt it.

Several members of the Houſe expoſtulated with him in the warmeſt terms on the unjuſtifiableneſs of his conduct. One of his relations, Colonel Gordon, threatened to run him through, the moment any of the rioters ſhould force their entrance into the Houſe.

It was ſeveral hours before the Houſe could carry on its deliberations with any regularity. The mob was in poſſeſſion of the Lobby and all other places in the vicinity of both Houſes. It was late in the afternoon before the members were relieved from this confuſion by the arrival of a party of the guards.

Order being reſtored, the buſineſs of the petition was reſumed; when Lord George Gordon told them it had been ſigned by near one hundred and twenty thouſand Britiſh Proteſtant ſubjects. He therefore peremptorily inſiſted that the petition ſhould be conſidered without any delay.

But notwithſtanding the dangers with which they were menaced, and the proof which the mover of the petition had given, that no means ſhould be left unemployed to compel them to grant it, the Commons continued immoveable in their determination to oppoſe the petition. Of two hundred members, then preſent in the Houſe, ſix only voted for it. All the reſt rejected it in defiance of all threats and intimidation.

In the mean time the mob, on the arrival of the guards, had diſperſed itſelf into various parts of the metropolis. Among other outrages, they demoliſhed two Romiſh chapels belonging to foreign miniſters; and openly vented the moſt terrible menaces againſt all people of that perſuaſion.

On the fourth of June the mob aſſembled in numerous bodies in the eaſtern parts of London; and

attacked the chapels and houſes of the Roman Catholics in that quarter: ſtripping them of their contents, which they threw into the ſtreet, and committed to the flames.

They renewed their outrages on the following day, deſtroying ſeveral Romiſh chapels, and ill uſing the people of that perſuaſion, and others who had befriended them. They demoliſhed the houſe of Sir George Saville, in reſentment of his having brought into Parliament the bill in favour of the Roman Catholics.

The dreadful menaces of the rioters againſt all perſons who had favoured the Roman Catholics, and the particular denunciations of revenge levelled at ſeveral diſtinguiſhed individuals in Parliament, did not prevent, next day, a great number of the members from attending the Houſe of Commons; where they reſolved that a committee ſhould be appointed to enquire into the preſent inſurrections, in order to diſcover and puniſh their authors and abettors.

The Houſe of Lords met at the ſame time; but the confuſions recommencing every where with aggravated fury, it was judged expedient by both Houſes to poſtpone any further ſittings till the riots were entirely ſubſided. To this intent they adjourned to the nineteenth.

During this day and the following, which were the ſixth and ſeventh of June, the rioters were abſolute maſters of the metropolis and its environs. Their outrageouſneſs knew no bounds; and they ſeemed in a manner determined to perpetrate all the miſchief that could be ſuggeſted to them.

Some of thoſe rioters who had been concerned in the demolition of the chapels belonging to foreign miniſters, had been ſeized and ſent to Newgate. The mob collected before that priſon, and demanded their immediate releaſe: on being refuſed, they proceeded

proceeded to throw firebrands and all manner of combuſtibles into the keeper's houſe; which unhappily communicated the fire to the whole building: the flames ſpread ſo rapidly, that this immenſe pile was ſoon in conflagration. In this ſcene of confuſion, the priſoners were all releaſed. They amounted to about three hundred; among whom ſeveral were under ſentence of death.

They ſet fire, in the ſame manner, to the King's Bench and Fleet priſons, and to a number of houſes belonging to Roman Catholics. The terror occaſioned by theſe incendiaries was ſuch, that moſt people hung out of their windows pieces of blue ſilk, which was the colour aſſumed by the rioters; and chaulked their doors and ſhutters with the words, "No Popery," by way of ſignifying they were friendly to their cauſe.

The night of the ſeventh of June concluded theſe horrors. No leſs than thirty-ſix different conflagrations were counted at the ſame time. The Bank had been threatened, and was twice aſſailed; but happily was too well guarded for their attempts.

Towards the cloſe of the evening, large bodies of troops arrived from all parts, in conſequence of the expreſſes that had been diſpatched the two foregoing days. They came in time to put a ſtop to the progreſs of the rioters. They fell upon them every where, and multitudes were ſlain and wounded, beſides the numbers that periſhed through intoxication: theſe were very conſiderable, as the liquor that ran from the diſtilleries of Mr. Langdale, whoſe houſe and property, being a Roman Catholic, they deſtroyed, was taken up in pailfulls by the mob.

It was not until the afternoon of the eighth, that people began to recover from their conſternation: during great part of the day, the diſorders of the

preceding night had created ſo terrible an alarm, that the ſhops were almoſt univerſally ſhut up over all London.

Six days had theſe horrible riots continued with little or no oppoſition of any effect. The reaſon was, that numbers apprehended they were the reſult of a premeditated deſign, and were conducted by men of reſolution, who acted in concert; and who, though under concealment, directed all the motions of the populace. No few ſuſpected that the emiſſaries of this country's enemies were not idle during theſe commotions, and would not fail to promote all the miſchief of which they were capable.

Whatever foundations there might be for ſuſpicions or ſurmiſes of this nature, certain it is, that a ſort of panic terror ſeemed to have ſtruck the inhabitants of the metropolis. The rioters were in all appearance compoſed of the loweſt and moſt deſpicable dregs of the populace; yet they carrried every thing before them without reſiſtance. Houſes were evacuated, and individuals fled before them, as from a victorious ſoldiery that had taken a town by ſtorm.

On the ſubſiding of this violent and unexpected commotion, it was thought proper to ſecure Lord George Gordon. He was arreſted, and committed cloſe priſoner to the Tower, after having undergone a long examination before the principal lords of the council.

In this manner ended one of the moſt ſurpriſing, unprecedented, and dangerous riots that ever happened in this country. Had it laſted a day or two longer, ſuch was the temper of the populace, and the backwardneſs to reſiſt their fury, that it is not improbable moſt, if not every part of the metropolis would have been laid in aſhes.

On the nineteenth of June, both Houſes met again according to adjournment. A ſpeech was made

made on this occaſion from the Throne, acquainting them with the meaſures that had been taken in conſequence of the diſturbances, and aſſuring them of the utmoſt readineſs to concur in whatever could contribute to the ſafety and maintenance of the laws and liberties of the people.

The ſpeech was highly approved, as proper and conſtitutional in every reſpect; but the conduct of adminiſtration was ſeverely cenſured, and charged with unpardonable neglect for not calling forth the civil power, and employing the military in due time to obviate the miſchiefs that had been committed. Miniſtry excuſed itſelf, from the want of ſufficient ſtrength to anſwer all the demands of aſſiſtance that were made during the riots, and the abſolute impoſſibility of ſuppreſſing them till the arrival of troops from the country.

The various petitions were now taken into conſideration that had been preſented for the repeal of the act which had occaſioned the riots; but the Houſe continued in the ſame mind. It did not chuſe to compromiſe the honour of the nation for the ſake of gratifying the weak and groundleſs requeſt of an ignorant and deluded multitude, influenced by enthuſiaſm, and the abſurd apprehenſion of dangers that were imaginary, and founded on miſinformation.

Such was the general purport of the diſcourſes made upon this occaſion. The beſt ſpeakers in the Houſe were thoſe who principally diſtinguiſhed themſelves on this critical emergency:— They avowed and ſupported the principles of religious freedom and toleration with the moſt ſtriking energy, and inſtead of relaxing from their former ſentiments on this ſubject, they confirmed and ſtrengthened them by a number of additional arguments, which however they might prejudice them among the fanatic party, raiſed their character high with

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cution of Proteſtants in countries where the Romiſh religion was eſtabliſhed.

After making theſe declarations, they concluded by bringing in and paſſing a bill of the moſt effectual nature for ſecuring the Proteſtant religion from the encroachments of Popery. Its purport was to reſtrain perſons profeſſing the Roman Catholic religion from teaching or being entruſted with the education or government of the children of Proteſtants.

But notwithſtanding theſe condeſcenſions, the ſpirit of fanaticiſm was not appeaſed: murmurs were ſtill heard among the multitudes that abetted the petition. As ignorance and obſtinacy are generally united, the vulgar and illiterate, of whom, excepting ſuch as were led by enthuſiaſm, they entirely conſiſted, continued to complain of the facility with which Parliament yielded to motives, which they repreſented as dictated by meer worldly wiſdom, and utterly inconſiſtent with the purity and ſtrictneſs of true religion.

In the midſt of theſe unhappy commotions, and throughout the whole tranſactions relating to the bill in favour of the Roman Catholics, and the petitions againſt it, the conduct of the principal clergymen both of the church of England, and among the diſſenters, reflected much honour upon their character, from the principles of tolerance they openly aſſerted on this occaſion. It opened a proſpect to perſons of ſound underſtanding and benevolent temper, which in a great meaſure attoned for the evils produced by outrageouſneſs of zeal, and deficiency of knowledge; it ſhowed the fervour of controverſy among divines to be greatly abated, and that the time would probably come, ere long, when not only religious diſputes, but difference of opinion in ſuch matters would be baniſhed from illuminated and polite ſociety.

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The melancholy effects of miſguided zeal were not, however, confined ſolely to London. The outrageous diſpoſition of the fanatic populace was preparing to act the like horrid ſcenes in other parts of England. The mob roſe in Hull, Briſtol, and Bath; but through the timely interpoſition of the magiſtracy, theſe places were ſaved from their fury.

As evil has been obſerved to be frequently productive of good, theſe dreadful riots gave occaſion to many precautions againſt the repetition of ſuch terrible diſaſters in future. In London, and other places, a ſpirit of watchfulneſs originated from them, which induced numbers of reputable individuals to form themſelves into aſſociations, for the preſervation of the peace againſt domeſtic inſurrections.

It was alſo attended with another conſequence, no leſs important. It impreſſed the public with the firmeſt conviction that popular violence is the moſt dangerous method of proceeding in order to obtain the redreſs of grievances, as it takes the execution of even the moſt juſt and laudable deſigns out of the hands of thoſe who are beſt qualified to conduct them, and delivers them over to ſuch as cannot fail, unleſs they act under a wiſer direction than their own, to become the inſtruments of confuſion and ruin.

The eighth day of July cloſed this ſeſſion, which was the moſt memorable and fertile in intereſting events of any ſince the breaking out of the American diſpute.

CHAP.

CHAP. LI.

Military Operations in America towards the close of the Year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine.

PREVIOUS to these transactions in Great-Britain, America had produced new scenes of military operations during the preceding summer and autumn. The rupture intended by the Court of Spain with England was no secret to the governors of the Spanish settlements. Prior to the notification delivered to the British ministry by Count Almadovar, they were making hostile preparations, and captured several English vessels before the notice of this event had been carried to that part of the world.

The government of Louisiana, which had been ceded by France to Spain, was in the hands of Don Bernardo Galvez, an officer of reputation, and much respected for his honour and humanity. He was perfectly apprized of the feeble condition of West Florida; and projected an invasion of that province before it could be put in a proper state of defence. General Campbell, who commanded the small number of British forces there, was wholly unacquainted with this design, or with any intention of hostilities by the Spaniards. They improved this circumstance to the utmost, by seizing an armed vessel, and several others laden with provisions and stores for the British troops.

Flushed with this success, the Spaniard advanced in great force in order to suprize the British troops. The total amount of these throughout the whole province, did not consist of more than five hundred men. They determined, however, upon the approach

proach of the enemy, to make a reſolute defence. They threw up, with all expedition, an intrenchment, which they fortified with all the induſtry which the ſtraitneſs of time would afford. Here they ſtood a ſiege of nine days, under the command of Colonel Dickſon; and behaved with ſo much bravery and ſkill, that the enemy was unable to force them, till the arrival of a train of heavy artillery, when they ſurrendered upon honourable conditions, which were obſerved with inviolate fidelity by the Spaniſh commander, Don Bernardo De Galvez. This expedition took place about the end of September, ſeventy-nine.

While this enterprize was carried on, another project was formed by the Spaniards againſt the Britiſh logwood cutters, ſettled in the Bay of Honduras, and on the Muſquito Shore. Theſe being hard preſſed, applied to the Governor of Jamaica, General Dalling, for aſſiſtance. A detachment was accordingly ſent to their relief under Captain Dalrymple, with neceſſary ſupplies of arms, ammunition, and artillery.

Before the arrival of theſe ſuccours, a body of Spaniards had taken poſſeſſion of St. George's Key, the chief Britiſh ſettlement on the coaſt of Honduras. They plundered it, and made a number of priſoners; but thoſe who eſcaped being joined by a body of their countrymen, retook it, and forced the enemy to retire.

In the mean time Captain Dalrymple, who had been informed of the loſs of St. George's Key, was haſtening to the relief of the diſperſed inhabitants. He fortunately fell in with a ſquadron diſpatched by Sir Peter Parker, Admiral on the Jamaica ſtation, in queſt of ſome regiſter ſhips richly laden; but which retreating into the harbour of Omoa, were too ſtrongly protected by the fort there, to be attacked by ſea. As the Spaniards had been compelled

pelled to abandon St. George's Key, it was propoſed to unite the forces that were now met, and to proceed directly againſt Omoa.

The land force under Captain Dalrymple being too inconſiderable of itſelf to attempt the fort of Omoa by land, the marines of the ſquadron and a ſtrong party of the ſettlers were added to it. But with this addition it did not out-number the garriſon.

The force deſtined to act by land was ſet on ſhore at about nine miles diſtance from the fort, at the duſk of the evening. The intention being to march directly on, in order to ſurprize and eſcalade it in the night. But no roads were to be found: they were compelled to explore their way through narrow footpaths, moraſſes, and over mountains ſo beſet with precipices, that they were obliged, in order to avoid them, to uſe lights made of cabbage trees.

Theſe difficulties ſo much retarded their progreſs, that they were at day break at a great diſtance from the fort. They were diſcovered by the enemy, who attacked them; but they were quickly diſperſed, and forced to withdraw into the town; from whence, as they continued to fire upon the Britiſh troops theſe found it neceſſary to ſet fire to it, much againſt their will.

While the town was in flames, the ſquadron took that opportunity to come into the bay, and to draw near the fort with an intent to batter it. But notwithſtanding a heavy cannonade, the garriſon returned the fire with ſo much reſolution, and were provided with ſo numerous an artillery, that no impreſſion could be made by that of the ſquadron, which could not, from want of wind, fetch near enough to do proper execution.

The troops being maſters of the ground adjacent to the fort, erected ſeveral batteries on the moſt advantageous ſituations to annoy it; but though they

they carried on their operations with great vigour, it was ſoon perceived, that the ſtrength of the place required pieces of weightier metal than thoſe which the beſiegers employed, as the walls were no leſs than eighteen feet in thickneſs.

This, with the conſideration of the conſequent impracticibility of carrying on a regular ſiege, the ſmallneſs of their force, and that they were in an enemy's country, from whence aſſiſtance to the beſieged might be daily expected, induced the Britiſh commanders to reſolve to try the ſucceſs of an eſcalade.

Early in the morning, on the twentieth of October, the neceſſary diſpoſitions being made, the troops advanced to the attack with great order and intrepidity. They entered the ditch, which happened fortunately to be dry, and fixed their ſcaling ladders againſt the walls, which were near thirty feet in height. The firſt who mounted were two ſeamen, who with admirable courage and preſence of mind, ſtood by the ladder by which they had got up, to guard it till others had aſcended; boldly preſenting their pieces againſt a large party drawn up to receive them; and retaining their fire, according to orders, till their comrades had joined them. The ſquadron, mean while, came in cloſe with the fort, upon which it kept a heavy fire.

The exceſſive daringneſs and celerity with which this attack was conducted, ſtruck the Spaniards with ſuch conſternation, that they remained as it were motionleſs, and unable to act, notwithſtanding the exhortation and example of their officers. They never recovered from this panic. The ſeamen and ſoldiers continuing to ſcale the walls with the moſt amazing quickneſs, the enemy made no defence. About a hundred of them eſcaped over the walls on the oppoſite ſide of the fort. The remainder of the garriſon laid down their arms and ſurrendered.

In

In this manner the ſtrong and important fortreſs of Omoa fell into the hands of the Britiſh troops. It was allowed by friends and foes, that no action during the whole war gained more reputation to the Britiſh arms. The courage and conduct diſplayed on this occaſion, were equally conſpicuous, and could not certainly have been exceeded.

An inſtance of heroiſm is reported to have happened on this occaſion, to which hiſtory affords nothing ſuperior in its kind, and which gave the Spaniards the higheſt idea of Britiſh valour. A common ſailor who had ſcaled the walls, had armed himſelf with a cutlaſs in each hand. Meeting with a Spaniſh officer unarmed, and juſt rouſed from ſleep, he ſcorned to take advantage of his condition; and generouſly preſented him one of his cutlaſſes, ſaying, "You are now on a footing with me." The officer was ſtruck with too much admiration at his magnanimity, to accept of his offer; and took juſt care to make the circumſtance duly known. So brave a man's name ſhould have been recorded.

The value of the booty taken from the Spaniards, was eſtimated at three millions of dollars. But the loſs which they moſt felt and lamented, was that of two hundred and fifty quintals of quickſilver, a commodity of indiſpenſible neceſſity in the working of the produce of their gold and ſilver mines. They offered accordingly to ranſom it at any price; but the Britiſh commanders acted with a diſintereſtedneſs that did them great honour. Though the retention of this article was to them far beneath the profits it would have produced, they refuſed to part with it, on account of the advantages the enemy would have derived from its poſſeſſion.

Actuated by the ſame motives, they would accept of no ranſom for the fortreſs of Omoa; for which the governor offered to lay down three hundred thouſand dollars.

Other

Other circumſtances highly honourable to the Britiſh character, accompanied this event. The Spaniſh military and inhabitants were treated with the utmoſt humanity: their perſonal effects remained untouched; and they experienced a generoſity at which they had reaſon to be the more aſtoniſhed, as their behaviour to the Britiſh ſettlers in the Bay of Honduras, had been remarkably ſevere and mercileſs.

The church plate and ornaments were, with the ſame generoſity, reſtored, on conditition that the articles of the capitulation ſhould be punctually complied with.

It was remarked with particular ſatisfaction, that both Captain Luttrel who commanded the ſquadron, and Captain Dalrymple, who was at the head of the land force, took the ſtricteſt care in their reſpective accounts to government to do juſtice to every individual acting under their orders, that deſerved ſpecial notice.

Thoſe officers whom they mentioned as claiming diſtinguiſhed praiſe, were Captains Pakenham, Parker, and Nugent, and Lieutenant Trott of the navy; Captain Carden of the military, who acted as Engineer, Lieutenants Walker and Dundas, who commanded the ſeaman on ſhore, the ſecond of whom was the fourth man who ſcaled the walls; Mr. Concanen, a midſhipman, who was the third; and Lieutenant Wightman, of the marines, who acted as aid-de-camp.

Very peculiar attention was paid by both the Britiſh commanders, to the releaſe from impriſonment, and the perſonal ſafety of the Britiſh ſubjects, who had been deprived of their liberty through the chances of war and other cauſes.

One of the moſt happy conſequences of the behaviour of the Engliſh at Omoa, was, that it impreſſed the Spaniſh nation with the higheſt opinion of the people

people of Britain; and inclined them to harbour much more favourable ſentiments in their behalf, and to adopt a much more friendly conduct towards them, than they had done before.

Having refuſed to ranſom the fort, a garriſon was left for its protection, on the departure of the Britiſh ſquadron; but as it was very inconſiderable from the ſmall number of men that could be ſpared, on account of the various ſervices for which they were wanted, the Spaniards in the neighbourhood reſolved to make an attempt to retake it. They collected a body of two thouſand men, with which they inveſted the fort on the twenty-fifth of November. The garriſon defended it with the utmoſt bravery, keeping a conſtant fire upon the enemy; and obliging them to retire for ſhelter, and take up their quarters behind a hill. Here they made preparations for an aſſault, in which, from their numbers, they made no doubt of ſucceeding. They ſummoned the garriſon to ſurrender, promiſing the honours of war, and a ſafe conveyance to Great Britain, with threats of ſeverity in caſe of a refuſal. Theſe demands not being complied with, the enemy continued his operations, and made all ready for an eſcalade.

In the mean time the condition of the beſieged afforded no hopes of making any effectual reſiſtance. They were but eighty-five in number, moſt of whom were, from illneſs and exceſſive fatigue, become incapable of duty. They were now obliged to make one ſentinel anſwer for five, by ſhifting his place, and challenging five different times. They had no ſurgeon to attend the ſick and wounded; none but ſalt proviſions, nor even any water, but what came from on board of a ſloop of war ſtationed abreaſt of the fort.

In this extremity they reſolved, notwithſtanding the menaces of the Spaniſh commander, to render the place as unſerviceable as they could make it. To

this purpoſe they ſpiked all the guns, and deſtroyed all the ammunition and military ſtores that could not be carried off. They even locked the gates of the fort, after which they embarked without the loſs of a ſingle man.

All this was performed in defiance of the large force that beſieged them, and when duly conſidered, was not leſs a matter of aſtoniſhment, than the very extraordinary manner in which the fort had been taken. The officer who conducted this remarkable defence and evacuation, was Captain Hulke of the navy.

While the honour of the Britiſh arms was ſo effectually ſupported on the continent of Spaniſh America, it was no leſs vigorouſly maintained in the Weſt Indies, by the bravery and vigilance of the naval commanders on that ſtation. Admiral Hyde Parker, aſſiſted by Admiral Rowley, kept the enemy in continual alarm, and intercepted the trade of the French iſlands in the moſt diſtreſſing manner. They took three large frigates diſpatched by Count D'Eſtaing to the Weſt Indies, after his failure in America. They ſeized or deſtroyed great part of a convoy, in ſight of the ſquadron at Port Royal in Martinico, under Monſieur De la Motte Piquet, who narrowly eſcaped being taken. He had ſailed out of that harbour, in order to favour the eſcape of that convoy, by engaging the Britiſh ſquadron. Having partly effected his purpoſe, he withdrew; but was purſued ſo cloſely that he was compelled to take ſhelter under the batteries aſhore. It was in this purſuit, that Captain Griffith of the Conqueror, an officer of great merit, was unfortunately ſlain. Theſe ſucceſſes happened towards the cloſe of ſeventy-nine, and the commencement of the enſuing year.

The tardy arrival of the convoy with the ſupplies of recruits and proviſions, under Admiral Arbuthnot,

hot, had occaſioned a late opening of the campaign of ſeventy-nine, in the vicinity of New-York. Nor was it attended with any remarkable events. Each ſide ſeeming to be chiefly occupied in watching the motions of the other, and in making incurſions and ſurprizing poſts; a kind of warfare which, though it kept the troops in exerciſe, produced nothing deciſive.

The Congreſs took this opportunity to carry into execution the deſign they had formed againſt the Indians who had been inſtrumental in the deſtruction and ravages committed in the back ſettlements of the Colonies. A conſiderable body of Continental regulars was ſelected for this purpoſe, and put under the command of General Sullivan.

The Indians forming the Confederacy of the Five Nations, were the enemy againſt whom this expedition was projected. They inhabited that immenſe tract of country lying between New England and the Middle Colonies, and the province of Canada. A conference had been held with them by the agents of Congreſs, at the commencement of the preſent hoſtilities, wherein they promiſed to obſerve a ſtrict neutrality between Great Britain and the Coloniſts. It was even ſaid that they offered to take up arms in favour of theſe; but were told, that no more was deſired of them than to remain faithfully neuter.

They ſoon departed, however, from this line of conduct, overcome by the preſents and promiſes of the Britiſh agents among them, and their own native appetite for depredation. They invaded the frontiers, carrying ſlaughter and devaſtation wherever they went, and perpetrating the moſt enormous barbarities.

They were accompanied in theſe incurſions by thoſe among the Coloniſts who had been expelled from the contiguous provinces for their attachment to the cauſe of Great Britain. Theſe having taken

refuge among thoſe Indians, in order to avoid the perſecution and ill uſage of their countrymen, and being kindly received, were in a manner incorporated with them.

Through this intermixture, the Indians became more expert in military matters, and of courſe more formidable: but unhappily for the character of the Refugees, many cruelties which they could not prevent, were committed by the Indians in thoſe expeditions wherein they bore a part, and were often by their incenſed countrymen attributed to their inſtigation, or laid directly to their charge.

The determination was now taken by Congreſs, totally to deſtroy this Indian nation. No other meaſure appeared ſufficient to give ſecurity to the ſettlements on the frontiers; where the inhabitants had lived in conſtant alarm ever ſince the beginning of hoſtilities; and had loſt all activity in the proſecution of their domeſtic improvements.

The intelligence of the preparations that were making againſt them, was received by the Indians with great courage and firmneſs. They reſolved to act upon this occaſion with the utmoſt boldneſs and ſpirit. They collected all their ſtrength; and marched with all ſpeed to thoſe parts, where they expected the Americans would begin their operations, in order to anticipate them, and ſeize thoſe paſſes of which the poſſeſſion would enable them to act with advantage.

They took accordingly a ſtrong poſition in the moſt woody and mountainous part of the country; which they fortified with great judgment. They raiſed a breaſt-work in their front, of large logs of wood, extending half a mile. Their right was covered by a river, and their left by a hill of difficult acceſs. In this poſture they waited the approach of the American army.

General

General Sullivan attacked them in this encampment, on the twenty-ninth of Auguſt. They ſtood a hot cannonade for more than two hours: but the breaſt-work being almoſt deſtroyed, and the Americans having reached the top of the hill upon their left, they were apprehenſive of being ſurrounded, and retreated immediately with the utmoſt ſpeed.

The behaviour of the Indians on this day was very courageous: they returned the fire of the Americans with great ſpirit and regularity; and would, it was thought, have maintained their ground, had not theſe been provided with a train of artillery; to which the defeat of the Indians was principally owing; and without which the poſt was ſo ſtrongly fortified, that it could not have probably been forced, notwithſtanding the valour and reſolution with which it was attacked by the Americans.

What chiefly contributed to the ſtand made by the Indians, was the preſence of two or three hundred American Refugees, who behaved with great bravery; and by whoſe direction they were guided in the conſtruction of their defences, and in the order and diſcipline they obſerved.

This engagement proved deciſive. After their trenches were forced, they fled without making any endeavour to rally. They were purſued two or three miles; but their flight was ſo ſwift, that they could not be overtaken. Their loſs in ſlain and wounded was very conſiderable, though few priſoners were made.

The conſternation occaſioned among the Indians by this defeat, was ſuch, that they loſt all hope of retrieving their affairs, and dropped all ideas of further reſiſtance. As the Americans advanced, they retreated before them with the utmoſt precipitation, and ſuffered them to proceed without any obſtruc-

tion, in the deſtructive operations they were commiſſioned to perform.

In purſuance of the orders he had received, General Sullivan penetrated into the heart of the country inhabited by the Five Nations, ſpreading every where the moſt extenſive deſolation. His letter to the Congreſs, giving an account of the progreſs and proceedings of the army under his command, was as complete a journal of deſtruction as ever was penned. No leſs than forty towns and ſettlements were deſtroyed, beſides detached habitations. All their fields of corn, and all their orchards and plantations; whatever, in ſhort, was in a ſtate of cultivation, underwent the ſame fate. The devaſtation was ſuch, that on the American army's leaving that country, not a houſe was left ſtanding to their knowledge, nor an Indian to be ſeen.

Such was the iſſue of this celebrated expedition, undertaken by way of retaliation for the outrages which the Indians had committed on the frontiers, and particularly in deſtroying the unfortunate ſettlement of Wioming, during the preceding ſummer.

What rendered this total ruin of the country poſſeſſed by the Five Nations, the more remarkable, was the degree of knowledge and expertneſs in agriculture, and in various domeſtic arts, to which it was now, for the firſt time, diſcovered that the Indians had attained. It appeared, by General Sullivan's account, that the lands about their towns were excellently cultivated, and their houſes large and elegantly conſtructed. The extent of their induſtry may be conjectured by his aſſerting, that the quantity of corn deſtroyed could not, by a moderate computation, amount to leſs than one hundred and ſixty thouſand buſhels; that their orchards were ſo well ſtocked, that no leſs than fifteen hundred fruit trees were cut down in one orchard only, numbers of which had evidently been planted many years,

years, and that their garden grounds contained immenſe quantities of vegetables of every kind.

So ſtrong was the reſentment of the Americans for the outrages committed by the Indians, and ſo powerful their determination to take the ſpeedieſt, as well as the ſevereſt vengeance, that not to be obliged to poſtpone it, the ſoldiers and officers of their army chearfully agreed to remain at ſhort allowance, in order to make their proviſions laſt till they had completed the deſtruction to the full extent it had been propoſed.

It was executed accordingly in ſpite of the many difficulties attending a march through a country, where the roads and paths had been ſo contrived, as to be almoſt undiſcoverable but to the inhabitants, where the enemy watched all their motions from poſitions where they lay concealed, ready to fall upon thoſe who ſtraggled from their main body, and to take every other advantage; and where the very labour of deſtruction was fatiguing to the higheſt degree.

Their perſeverance in accompliſhing the deſign they came upon, was a ſtriking proof how ſtrongly the paſſion of revenge is able to actuate human nature, eſpecially when added to the motives of ſafety and intereſt. Both theſe, indeed, were no leſs conſulted upon this occaſion than the former. The countries from which theſe Indian nations were now expelled, were poſſeſſed of as fertile and inviting a ſoil as any in North America; and opened a well grounded proſpect of proving as rich and uſeful ſettlements as any throughout the continent.

Notwithſtanding the ſucceſs with which the Colonies had maintained their independence, they laboured under many inconveniencies in the internal arrangement of their affairs. The prices of all kinds of merchandize, and even of many neceſſary articles in domeſtic life, had riſen to a degree that proved

highly diſtreſſing to all claſſes. Many endeavours were uſed to obviate, or to remedy theſe evils; but they ſtill continued to perplex the public, and were no ſmall hindrance and diſcouragement in the proſecution of their various undertakings.

But of all the difficulties they had to contend with, none proved ſo arduous and trying as the depreciation of their paper money. The ſcarcity of gold and ſilver ſpecie, had obliged Congreſs, at the commencement of the war, to emit immenſe ſums in bills redeemable by the ſtates. But the neceſſity of the times had obliged them to make ſeveral additions to the firſt emiſſions. Towards the cloſe of the year ſeventy-nine, upwards of thirty millions ſterling had been fabricated in this manner. But this currency was ſo depreciated, that it was fallen thirty times below par. Such a difference between its real and nominal value, naturally alarmed the public, and there were multitudes who began to apprehend that this incumbrance would prove an inſuperable evil.

It was indiſpenſibly neceſſary to remove the diſtruſt entertained by the maſs of the people in the ability of the United States to redeem their bills.—Unleſs this matter could be cleared up to their ſatisfaction, it was juſtly foreſeen that the difficulty of raiſing money would encreaſe, and that the paper in circulation would continue to decreaſe in value, till it became almoſt of no ſignificancy.

In order to diſpel the apprehenſions and deſpondency that were daily gaining ground upon this account, the Congreſs drew up a circular letter to their conſtituents, wherein they uſed a variety of arguments to convince them that their fears were ill-founded, and that they had every reaſon to be perſuaded they would be able to ſurmount every difficulty.

The

The two principal arguments which they held out to their conſideration, were the ſucceſs of the preſent revolution, and the ſufficiency of the natural wealth and reſources of America to anſwer all the purpoſes propoſed.

"The time has been," ſaid they, "when honeſt men might, without being chargeable with "timidity, have doubted the ſucceſs of the preſent "revolution: but that period is paſt; the inde- "pendence of America is now as fixed as fate, and "the efforts of Britain againſt it are as vain and "fruitleſs as the raging of the waves that beat "againſt our ſhores."

The letter then entered into a deſcription of the Britiſh government and people, calculated to diminiſh all terrors on their account. It repreſented them in the moſt opprobrious colours that the extremeſt averſion and rancour could inſpire.—"Againſt the fury of theſe enemies," ſaid they, "you made a ſucceſsful reſiſtance, when ſingle, "alone, and friendleſs, in the days of weakneſs "and infancy, before your hands had been taught "to war, or your fingers to fight: and can there "be any reaſon to apprehend that the ſupreme Diſ- "poſer of human events, after having ſeparated "us from the houſe of bondage, and led us to- "wards the land of liberty and promiſe, will leave "the work of our political redemption unfiniſhed?

"In cloſe alliance," continued they, "with one "of the moſt powerful nations in Europe, in "amity with many others, and enjoying the good- "will of all, what danger have we to fear from "Britain? Whoever conſiders that theſe States are "daily increaſing in power, that their armies are "become veterans, that their governments, found- "ed in freedom, are perfectly eſtabliſhed, that in "addition to France, Spain with fleets and armies "ready for war, and a treaſury overflowing with "wealth,

"wealth, has entered the lists against Britain, that "the other European nations, often insulted by "her pride, and alarmed by the strides of her am- "bition, have left her to her fate; whoever consi- "ders these things, instead of doubting the issue "of the war, will rejoice in the sure and certain "prospect of success."

After establishing this point, they then proceed- ed to prove, that the natural wealth and resources of America were fully adequate to the payment of the debt incurred in its defence.

They supposed that at the conclusion of the war, their debts would amount to three hundred mil- lions of dollars. The payment of this sum, divided among three millions of individuals, which was the population they assigned to the United States, would take from each one hundred dollars; a small propor- tion, when the time was considered that would be allowed them to discharge it.

But by the expiration of that time, which would not be probably less than twenty years, the number of inhabitants in America would be much more than double their present amount. By natural population they were known to increase in that proportion every twenty years. But there were the highest reasons to believe that the emigrations from other countries to America would be henceforth much more consider- able than ever. On the supposition that ten thousand families would arrive the first year after the war, and as many during every successive year, it was clear that from this perpetual augmentation of num- bers, which doubled in every twenty years, great part of the debt would become payable not merely by the present number of inhabitants, but by that number increased through its own population, by the multitudes of emigrants from other countries, and their proportionate increase. In this manner every

every perſon's ſhare of the debt would be conſtantly diminiſhing by others coming in to pay a proportion of it.

"Hence," added they, "we may form ſome "idea of the future population of theſe States.— "Extenſive wilderneſſes, now hardly known or "explored, remain to be cultivated; and vaſt "lakes and rivers, whoſe waters have for ages "rolled in ſilence and obſcurity to the ocean, are "yet to hear the din of induſtry, to become ſubſer-"vient to commerce, and to boaſt delightful villas "and ſpacious cities riſing on their banks."

Having thus ſtated the probable numbers among whom the payment of the debt would be re-partitioned, they expatiated largely on their ability to accompliſh that object.

"They who enquire," ſaid they, "how many "millions of acres are contained only in the ſettled "parts of North America, and how much each "acre is worth, will acquire very enlarged, and yet "very inadequate ideas of the value of this coun-"try. But thoſe who will carry their inquiries "further, and learn that we paid heretofore an an-"nual tax to Britain of three millions ſterling in "the way of trade, and ſtill grew rich; that our "commerce was then confined to her; that we "were obliged to carry our commodities to her "market, and conſequently to ſell them at her "price; that we were compelled to purchaſe fo-"reign commodities at her ſtores, and on her "terms, and were forbidden to eſtabliſh any ma-"nufactories incompatible with her views of gain; "that in future the whole world will be open to "us, and that we ſhall be at liberty to purchaſe "from thoſe who will ſell on the beſt terms, and to "ſell to thoſe who will give the beſt prices; that as "this country encreaſes in number of inhabitants,

"and

"and cultivation, the productions of the earth will "be proportionably encreaſed, and the riches of "the whole proportionably greater. Whoever ex- "amines the force of theſe, and ſimilar obſerva- "tions, muſt ſmile at the ignorance of thoſe who "doubt the ability of the United States to redeem "their bills."

Such were the chief arguments and allegations with which the Congreſs combated the apprehenſions of the many that were doubtful, whether it would ever be in the power of America to extinguiſh the immenſe debt it had contracted.

But Congreſs was not alone in theſe endeavours to keep up the ſpirit of the people. A number of publications came forth to the ſame intent; many of them written with great ſtrength and energy of ſtile and reaſoning; but marked at the ſame time with an acrimony and illiberality of ſentiment and language, that much diminiſhed their merit.

It has been ſaid in mitigation of the cenſure which they incurred upon that account, that the motive which actuated thoſe who wrote in this manner, was the neceſſity of preſerving in its fulleſt vigour, that force which aroſe from the reſentment and indignation of the people at large, whoſe animoſity required continual excitement in order to prevent it from ſtagnating.

Such an apology, if it may deſerve the name, did not, however, ſatisfy perſons of candour and judgment. Whoever was in fault, Great Britain or the Colonies, it became neither, in the vindication of their reſpective cauſe, to have recourſe to abuſe and defamation. It is a fortunate circumſtance that people are not inclined to form their ideas of the Engliſh and the Americans from the writings that have appeared on both ſides, during the unhappy conteſt that has at laſt ſeparated them from each other. Such is the falſe and injurious light in which

which theſe have reciprocally repreſented them, that they would ſuffer materially in their reputation, did not the world well know that they are, in many eſſential reſpects, but one and the ſame people; and that allowing for ſome blemiſhes, which the viciſſitudes of time and human affairs are apt to introduce among nations, they ſtill retain the virtues and great qualities that dignified the character of their illuſtrious and common anceſtors.

END OF VOL. III.

